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FACTORS INFLUENCING ONE CANADIAN GRADUATE STUDENT AND TWO CHINESE GRADUATE STUDENTS' COMPREHENSION OF SOME SIMPLE METAPHORS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

©

BY

VICTOR YONGCHUN WANG

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Factors Influencing One Canadian Graduate Student and Two Chinese Graduate Students' Comprehension of Some Simple Metaphors in English Language** submitted by **Victor Yongchun Wang** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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DATE: January 18, 1994

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated, with love and respect, to Chuck and Linnie Chamberlin as an expression of my sincere gratitude for the kindness with which they arranged my education in Canada, welcomed me to their home, provided me with financial support, guided me in my pursuit of knowledge and treated me as a member of their family.

ABSTRACT

A review of the reading research shows that the understanding of metaphor and other figurative language devices by ESL or EFL readers, the extent to which these devices affect ESL or EFL students' reading comprehension, and the factors affecting ESL or EFL students' comprehension of metaphors and figurative language devices in English language have not been studied in any depth to formulate a comprehensive body of research literature. The present study has the purpose of investigating the factors that affect the metaphor comprehension of two Chinese graduate students and one Canadian graduate student and the factors which contribute to learning about metaphor.

In this research, detailed descriptions of the English language education experience of the three participants are provided. Participants were all asked to explain the meaning of some simple metaphors in English language, to offer their perspectives on the factors influencing metaphor comprehension, to provide their insights on how to help Chinese students understand simple metaphors in English language and how to teach English to the Chinese students in China.

The following findings are a result of the analysis of the data and its relevance to the research literature concerning metaphor research and the teaching of English as a foreign language:

1. EFL or ESL readers' native culture influences their metaphor interpretation. Specifically, the readers' acculturation stage to the target language culture determines their abilities to comprehend simple metaphors. It also has been shown in this research that culture, in general, determines the attribute presentations in the topic and the vehicle, and influences the estimation of the attribute salience in the vehicle.

2. The readers' English language proficiency is also shown to be a factor influencing their comprehension of simple metaphors.

3. The cognitive development level provides a basis for the readers' interpretation of simple metaphors.

4. Individual experience plays an important role in metaphor comprehension.

5. This research evinces that explicit linguistic context can assist readers to comprehend the simple metaphors, and that the socioeconomic status of the reader and the reader's motivation influence metaphor comprehension.

6. Five points were identified from the data on helping the Chinese students better comprehend simple metaphors in English and on how to learn and teach English. They are: 1) Help students build the knowledge of the attribute presentation of the topic and the vehicle. 2) Put the simple metaphors in an explicit context. 3) Provide formal instruction on the principles of metaphor. 4) Teach the English speaking countries' culture in the English language class. 5) Change the traditional language teaching methodology in English language classrooms in China.

On the basis of the data analysis, an instruction method on improving metaphor comprehension in English language and a new triangulation approach to English language teaching was envisaged by the researcher.

After the research, implications for further research on the problem of the "low/high condition" salience imbalance notion between the topic and the vehicle, the mapping of the attribute presentation for the topic and the vehicle, and the methodologies on metaphor instruction for ESL and EFL students were proposed.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> ... to completely analyze what we do when we read would almost be the acme of a psychologist's dream for it would be to describe very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind, as well as to unravel the tangled story of the most remarkable specific performance that civilization has learned in all its history.
>
> Huey (1908/1969, p. 8)

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Huey's famous quotation about the aims of the psychology of reading is as relevant today as it was when he wrote it in 1908. The quotation usually goes before an apology for how little we have learnt in the past years about our reading comprehension process. Today, the researcher wishes to break with that tradition and uses Huey's quotation to start his thesis. After reviewing some of the literature on reading comprehension research, it can be seen that though we have not fully reached Huey's ultimate aims, still we have achieved substantial progress on the understanding of the process of people's reading comprehension.

Research on reading comprehension among speakers of English as a first language (L1) has shown that the ability to understand printed text is based not only on the reader's linguistic knowledge, but also on his or her general background knowledge of the world or schema, and the extent to which that background knowledge or schema is activated during the mental process of reading (Anderson, 1984). In terms of the schema-theoretical approaches to reading research, the reader is viewed as being at least as important as the text, comprehension is taken to be the reader's construction of meaning from the printed text, reading is an interactive process between the reader and the printed text. Meaning does not reside in the printed text, rather meaning is constructed out of the interaction between a reader's activated background knowledge and what is in the text. If a reader is not actively using his or her background knowledge or lacking the background knowledge, a significant part of the reading process will not be able to take place, and the construction of meaning will suffer. Reading research, where English is the first language, has shown that the better a reader is able to access background knowledge about either the content area of the printed text or the structure of the text, the better he or she will be able to comprehend, to store in long term memory, and to recall the text (Anderson, Spiro and Anderson, 1978).

Much less research in reading comprehension has been done to date to investigate the role of schema or background knowledge in English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) compared with English as a first language. However, some recent studies of English as a second language (Carrell 1981; Johnson, 1981) demonstrate that a lack of background knowledge contributes to difficulty in reading comprehension. Most of these studies show that ESL or EFL readers understand and recall better when the printed texts deal with their own familiar culture (i.e., materials for which they have a better developed background knowledge) than they do when the texts deal with a less familiar or unfamiliar culture (i.e., materials for which they lack the appropriate schemata or the background knowledge) (Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson 1979; Carrell 1981; Johnson, 1981). Background knowledge items such as knowledge of children's games in a particular culture, structure of the English language texts, content area knowledge of a specific subject area, national holidays and marriage rites of a specific nation have been studied and proven to contribute to the difficulty of ESL or EFL readers. A survey of research literature on background knowledge in reading in ESL or EFL settings (Carrell, 1983) shows three separate components of background knowledge that have been identified and researched in ESL and EFL reading research literature. They are: "(1) prior knowledge in the content area of the text (familiar vs. novel); (2) prior knowledge that the text is about a particular content area (context vs. no context); (3) degree to which the lexical items in the text reveal the content area (transparent vs. opaque)" (Carrell, 1983, p. 183).

An important part of cultural background knowledge for English as a first language readers is their knowledge and understanding of metaphor and other figurative language devices in English language (Danesi, 1986; Gunderson, Slade and Rosenke, 1988). But to date, little research (Gunderson, Slade and Rosenke, 1988; Johnson, 1989; and Radencich and Baldwin, 1985) has been done on this aspect of background knowledge or schema in ESL or EFL reading comprehension.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that affect the metaphor comprehension of two graduate students from China where English is a foreign language and a Canadian graduate student whose native language is English and also to explore some factors which contribute to metaphor comprehensions. The understanding of metaphor and other figurative language devices by ESL or EFL readers and to what extent these devices effect ESL or EFL students' reading comprehension as well as the factors affecting ESL or EFL students' comprehension of metaphors and figurative language devices in English language have not been studied or researched in any depth to formulate a comprehensive body of research literature. This research will provide thick description of the English language education experience of the three graduate students who are presently registered as full time students at the University of Alberta. The researcher is aiming to draw some implications from the case studies to help other Chinese students to better comprehend simple metaphors in English language and how to effectively teach English language to Chinese students in the People's Republic of China.

1.3 THE FOLLOWING AREAS WERE EXPLORED

1. Are cultural factors the main ones influencing comprehension of simple metaphors in English language for the Chinese students?
2. Is English language proficiency a factor influencing comprehension of simple metaphors in English language for the Chinese students?
3. Is the level of cognitive development a factor influencing comprehension of simple metaphors in English language for the Chinese students?
4. Is individual experience the main source from which the interpretations of simple metaphors in English language was drawn for the Canadian student and the two Chinese students?
5. What other factors affect the Chinese graduate students' and the Canadian graduate student's understanding of the simple metaphors in English language?
6. What implications can be drawn from these case studies for the teaching of comprehension of simple metaphors in English language and for the teaching of English language to the Chinese students in China?

1.4 PARTICIPANTS

In the present study, three graduate students at the University of Alberta were chosen as participants. One was a Canadian graduate student, the other two were graduate students from mainland China.

Since 1978 when the Chinese government adopted an open-door policy, the relationship between China and some western countries has improved greatly. In order to improve its science and technology, the Chinese government sent many students and scholars to western countries to study. In 1991, according to Liang's Chinese Embassy statistics there were more than 9,000 Chinese students in Canada (Liang, 1992). Liang further states, "In the University of Alberta alone there were more than 600 students and visiting scholars (information from the International Students' Center, University of Alberta) from P. R. China, who were studying and working in different departments, mainly in faculties of science and engineering" (Liang, 1992, p. 1).

The two Chinese graduate students chosen have completed their post-secondary education and obtained bachelor or master's degrees in universities and colleges in the People's Republic of China before embarking on further study or research at the University of Alberta, Canada. Before entering the Canadian university, they learnt English as a foreign language in middle schools and universities in China and passed the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). The minimum acceptable score on the TOEFL required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Alberta for international students is 550.

The two Chinese graduate students are majoring in science or other non-social science fields. One participant was a Chinese graduate student who had been in Canada for at least five years. The other participant was a full-time graduate student who has been in Canada for about two years.

The last participant was a native born Canadian graduate student majoring in science. The Canadian graduate student was chosen for the purpose of comparing the effects of metaphor and metaphorical language in an English native speaker on comprehension and perspectives with his or her Chinese counterparts.

Throughout this research paper common English language names will be used to address the three participants.

1.5 THE RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING THE CHINESE AND THE CANADIAN PARTICIPANTS

The rationale for choosing a Chinese student who had been in Canada for five years and a Chinese student who had been in Canada for two years to participate in this study is derived from Krashen's "The Input Hypothesis" (1985) and the Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1978; Brown, 1980) second language acquisition theories. The researcher's personal experience in Canada and his close contacts with Chinese students also contributed to the formation of the rationale. The rationale for selecting a Canadian graduate student in this study was to compare the comprehension and perspectives of metaphor and metaphorical language in an English native speaker with the two Chinese graduate students. The following information briefly explains the above second language acquisition theories and the rationale for choosing the Chinese participants.

1.5.1 Krashen's "The Input Hypothesis"

Krashen's theory has enjoyed considerable prominence in recent second language acquisition research. His theory has been regarded by Ellis as "the most comprehensive of existing theories" (Ellis, 1988, p. 313). The Input Hypothesis theory consists of five hypotheses: 1. The Acquisition-learning Hypothesis; 2. The Natural Order Hypothesis; 3. The Monitor Hypothesis; 4. The Input Hypothesis; and 5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

The Acquisition-learning Hypothesis: Krashen explains his belief that there are two independent ways of developing abilities in second languages. One is acquisition, and the other is learning. Ellis has a detailed description of this hypothesis. He writes,

> "Acquisition" occurs subconsciously as a result of participating in natural communication where the focus is on meaning. "Learning" occurs as a result of conscious study of the formal properties of the language. In storage, "acquired" knowledge is located in the left hemisphere of the brain (in most users) in the language areas; it is available for automatic processing. "Learnt" knowledge is metalinguistic in nature. It is also stored in the left hemisphere, but not necessarily in the language areas; it is

> available only for controlled processing. Thus, "acquired" and "learnt" knowledge are stored separately. In performance, "acquired" knowledge serves as the major source of initiating both the comprehension and production of utterances.
> (Ellis, 1988, p. 314)

In the actual use of language, Krashen believes, that learnt knowledge is only useful when the speaker tries to edit his or her language performance. He indicates that knowledge such as grammar, or vocabulary usage that the students learnt in the class, to some extent, is not very useful during their actual performance in the second language.

The Natural Order Hypothesis: This hypothesis was first proposed for second language acquisition by Corder in 1967. It states that people acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules tending to come early and others late. Krashen stresses that this hypothesis does not indicate that every person would acquire grammatical structures in the exact same order. It indicates that, in general, certain structures tend to be acquired early and certain structures tend to be acquired late (Krashen, 1983).

The Monitor Hypothesis: This hypothesis states how acquisition and learning are used in production. Krashen believes that people's ability to produce utterances in another language comes from their "acquired knowledge", that is, from their subconscious knowledge. The learnt knowledge, serves only as an editor, or Monitor. The function of this device is to edit people's language performance. The monitor uses the "learnt knowledge" to control or modify utterances by people generated from their "acquired knowledge". Krashen believes that this device has only a very limited function in our actual language performance. Three conditions were listed by Krashen under which the monitor could work. They were: 1) there must be plenty of time; 2) the focus of the talk must be on form and not on meaning; and 3) the speaker must know the grammatical rules (Krashen, 1983).

The Input Hypothesis: This hypothesis claims that people acquire language in only one way--by understanding messages, or by receiving sufficient "comprehensible input".

Comprehensible input (i + 1), is second language input a little beyond the current level of the learner's second language competence.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis: The affective filter, as defined by Krashen, "is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition" (Krashen, 1985, p. 3). The function of this filter, as described by Ellis, "controls how much input the learner comes into contact with, and how much input is converted into intake" (Ellis, 1988, p. 315). This hypothesis recognizes the strength of the learner's motivation, self-confidence and anxiety state.

In this theory, Krashen is promoting the idea that formal instruction on language will have a minor influence on the learner's second language performance. Productive second language learning can happen only when the learner is motivated and he or she can receive sufficient comprehensible target language input.

1.5.2 The Acculturation Model

Acculturation is the process by which a person becomes adapted to a different culture (Brown, 1980). Several distinct stages of acculturation were identified by Johnson. They are: 1) initial euphoria, 2) culture shock, 3) gradual adjustment, and 4) adaptation (Johnson, 1986). Brown (1980) and Schumann (1978) believe that acculturation affects second language acquisition. He states,

> ...second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language.
> (Schumann, 1978, p. 34)

Using Schumann's terminology, second language acquisition is determined by the degree of social distance between the learner and the target language culture group. Ellis explained Schumann's terminology. He wrote,

> Social distance is the result of a number of factors which affect the learner as a member of a social group in contact with the target language group ... The social factors are primary.
> (Ellis, 1988, p. 305)

Central to Schumann's theory (1978) is the notion that the greater the social distance between two cultures, the greater the difficulty that the learner will have in learning the second language, and conversely, the smaller the social distance, the better will be the language learning situation.

1.5.3 The Rationale for Choosing the Participants

Of course, there are serious flaws in a number of aspects in the above two theories. In the Acculturation Model, there is no specification on how L2 knowledge is internalized and used. In other words, it does not tell us how the target language and the learner's internal processing operate. It only addresses the issue of naturalistic second language acquisition, where the learner has contact with the target language group. Krashen's definition of acquisition-learning is being criticized as unreliable, because he defined the distinction between the two terms only in terms of subconscious and conscious processes, which could not be justified empirically. These theories show that some researchers believe that a second language is not learnt, but acquired. The acquisition of second language depends on the learner's acculturation to the target language culture group, on the amount of input of the target language that he or she had received, on the motivation of the learner and many other affective factors. The researcher has studied at the University of Alberta for almost two years, and from his close contacts with many different groups of Chinese graduate students, from the courses that he had taken at the University and from the above theories, he made the following assumptions: in a university setting, if the Chinese graduate student is motivated, willing to study hard, open to various English language inputs and acculturation, the longer he or she stays in an English speaking Canadian university, the better he or she will acquire the English language.

In this study, the researcher chose a five-year-stay-in-Canada Chinese graduate student and a two-year-stay-in-Canada Chinese graduate student. The researcher had the expectation that the five-year-stay-in-Canada Chinese student would acculturate and acquire more natural language input due to the length of his or her stay in Canada and therefore he or she would have better English language proficiency and hence comprehend simple metaphors in English language better than the two-year-stay-in-Canada Chinese graduate student. One Canadian graduate student was also chosen for this study. The purpose of choosing a Canadian student was to compare the effects of metaphor and metaphorical language in an English native speaker on comprehension and perspectives with his or her Chinese counterparts.

1.6 THE RESEARCHER AS RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In a qualitative (or naturalistic) research (or inquiry), the relationship between the researcher and the respondent, as Guba observes, is closely "interrelated, with each influencing the other" (Guba, 1981, p. 78). The in-depth understanding or meaning of a specific social phenomenon comes from the interaction between the researcher and the respondent. As Merriam points out qualitative research "depends on the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator during data gathering and analysis" (Merriam, 1985, p. 33). Chamberlin (1987) expresses the same concern, he states, "Two researchers sitting in the same room, focusing on the same research questions, would still attend to different aspects of the setting and interaction, and would give events different interpretations" (Chamberlin, 1987, p. 3-4). Chamberlin believes that in a naturalistic inquiry, the researcher will bring his or her own biases, intuitions and personal history to the research, and this will serve as "a filter, screening out some events, emphasizing others" (Chamberlin, 1987, p. 4). According to him, sharing some knowledge of the researcher's personal history, belief and value system with the readers will help to better understand how that "filter" works in the study. In the coming text, some information about the researcher's personal history, learning and teaching experience, belief or theory on the language processing formulated during his learning experience and teaching practice will be provided.

I was born in a small agricultural county in a remote border province in the northeast part of the People's Republic of China. The little county is situated in the mountain area, and there is no railway to connect this county to the outside world. My parents were ordinary clerks working for the county government. I am the eldest child in the family with two sisters and one brother. Though my parents at that time could not earn much money to buy luxury toys for their children, still they could provide enough good food to feed us. As a child growing up in the new socialist China, I felt I had a very good childhood.

In 1972 when I was eight years old, I entered a primary school in that small town and started my elementary education. By the time I was in primary school, the Great Cultural Revolution in mainland China was over. With the changing of the political atmosphere, people began to pay some attention to knowledge and actual learning. My parents were very ordinary clerks in the government at that time and believed that if their children did not have any particular skills, it would be hard for them to survive in the coming society as they did not have enough power to control their children's future. Great emphasis was placed on our studies in the elementary school. I learned the Chinese language and Arithmetic during my elementary school education years. I can still remember at that time, besides the homework the teacher asked us to do at the end of the day, my parents gave me extra homework to do, such as reciting Chairman Mao's poetry. They knew very little about education, yet they believed that to learn good poetry and good prose by heart can exercise a person's mind and therefore improve intelligence and shrewdness.

In 1976, after ten years political turmoil and power struggle, China entered a relatively peaceful era. Great changes in the national educational system were made and new educational policies were developed. This was the year I entered middle school. The second year I was in the middle school the government changed its policies regarding the enrollment of new university students. To the ordinary working people, this was great news, because it indicated that even children of powerless peasants, if they passed the college entrance examination, were able to enter a university, and after graduating from the university, would be assigned a stable job by the government and live a very different life. At that time, this was the only route for the children from ordinary family to go up in society. Like thousands and thousands of young Chinese boys and girls, I plunged myself into the fierce competition for the rare university student positions. To be successful in the examination, you had to know Chinese language and literature, history of China and history of the world, geography, mathematics, Marxist philosophy, and English language. The English language test for the entrance examination mainly focused on mastery of the grammar skills in English. The middle school instruction on all the subjects at that time was mainly oriented towards the college entrance examination. The English language instruction that I received at middle school was mainly rote memory of isolated grammar rules and vocabulary.

In 1982, when I was eighteen years of age, after a satisfactory performance on the college entrance examination, I entered a teacher's university in the capital city of the Province specializing in English language. At the university, I began to study English more formally and more seriously. Instruction in English at that teacher's university was mainly carried out through the traditional Grammar-translation approach. Memorization of grammar rules and performance on grammar tests were stressed in the whole English language education curriculum. Listening, speaking, writing and reading were not elevated to the position that they should be at. Fortunately, during my university education years I met a Canadian professor. By constant interactions with him, I improved my English language communication skills. As I was in a teacher's university, I was also introduced to the Grammar-translation approach to EFL teaching.

In 1986, the same year after I got my BA, I entered a master's program in the same university specializing in British and American Literature. During my three years graduate study, I was introduced to some literary theories, and several British and American novelists and poets. While doing my graduate study, I worked part-time as an English language teacher at the university teaching English to undergraduate English majors. The research topic for my master's thesis was on the symbolism in Stephen Crane's novel The Red Badge of Courage.

In 1989, after I finished my MA degree, I was assigned to work as an English language teacher at a university. Like many other English language teachers, I also employed the Grammar-translation approach in my teaching practice. Explaining English language grammar, making up drills for my students to practice and teaching test-taking were my routine activities.

In 1991, I enrolled in a Master of Education program at the University of Alberta. The next year, I started taking courses.

In the second term of the 1991-92 academic year, I attended ED EL 450, Introduction to Teaching of English as a Second Language, ED EL 451, Methods and Programs in the teaching of Second language and ED FDN 493, Basic Issues in Contemporary Education. I was introduced to topics such as approaches of ESL and EFL teaching from the Grammar-translation Approach to Communicative Language Teaching approach; second language acquisition theories; approaches on the research of second language acquisition such as contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage; culture, language and intercultural communication; bilingualism and academic achievement; democracy and education; and John Dewey's experience and education.

In the academic year of 1992-1993, I took Ed EL 505, Theories of Language Processing, ED ADU 551, Assessment in ESL, ED EL 551, Program Development in the Teaching of English as a Second or Other Language, LING 102, Introduction to Linguistics, ED EL 590, Teaching Language Arts in the Elementary Schools and ED EL 567, Introduction to Educational Research. I was introduced to topics such as principles of L2 testing; language test construction; IQ Test; curriculum development for ESL and EFL students; language and thought; child language acquisition; reading theory; writing theory; Vygotsky, Piaget and Bruner; and critical theory.

After studying in this university for one year and a half, I felt my horizon of knowledge being broadened, and my mind became more active, sensitive to new ideas, and thirsty for knowledge. After attending these courses, I began to understand that language is a vast and complex phenomenon. It is pervasive in human experience. Just as Lindfors states,

> Language is always and everywhere with us. It pervades every area of our waking lives--our family relationships, our friendships, our working relationships or even our loneliness. And those of us who carry on lively conversations or write great poetry in our dreams would argue that language pervades our hours of sleep as well as our hours of waking.
> (Lindfors, 1980, p. 1)

The questions that people have been asking for many centuries about language, such as--What is language?, How does language work?, How did language begin?, How does language change?, and How do people learn language?, stimulated me to learn more. Answers to these questions cannot be fully satisfied, they will only be addressed to a very limited dimension in this complex and elusive phenomenon.

1.7 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS TO THE RESEARCH

How did my above mentioned learning, teaching and learning experiences as "a filter" work when I was preparing this research, interviewing the participants, summarizing the data and discussing the findings? I think, they worked in the following manner. First, my second language learning and teaching experiences focused my concerns of this research. After finishing my research on the symbolism in Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage for my MA in China, I always considered the question of how symbolism differed from metaphor, how both of them would work in the act of linguistic communication. My curiosity in those issues led me to start this research. While preparing and doing the research, my previous research experience, my previous graduate study in English and American Literature, my learning and teaching experience in China, and the courses I took at this University controlled or played an important role in my forming or reforming the interview focus and the interview questions. They predisposed me to emphasize the advantages of the Grammar-translation and the Audiolingual approaches, and lead me to seek for a combination of the Grammar-translation, Audiolingual and Communicative Language Teaching approaches to solve ESL and EFL students' language teaching and learning problems. Second, my Chinese cultural background and my previous communist political education experiences in China shaped my interests. They might have also lead me to emphasize the societal and cultural differences, language that reflects the antimony and differences between the different social and economic classes, and overlook other aspects of the problem. At the end of the research, my tentative belief that language is a complex and elusive phenomenon may inhibit me from making any broad and conclusive truth statements about language teaching and learning. My personal interests and concerns surely permeated every process and part of my research work.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Attribute: It is "a semantic meaning representing a constituent or element (subschemata) of the schema of a concept. It can be essential (defining) or incidental (characteristic) to the meaning of a lexical item" (Mate, 1987, p. 6). The terms "attribute" and "feature" will be used interchangeably in this study.

Canadian students: This term refers to the graduate students who were born in Canada, whose first language is English and who are at the time of this study in their graduate programs in a Canadian university.

Chinese students: This refers to the graduate students who come from the People's Republic of China to pursue their graduate studies and research in a Canadian university.

Common feature: "A semantic feature which is shared by the topic and the vehicle of the metaphor" (Mate, 1987, p. 6). In "Her eyes were candles", "glowed" is a common feature of the topic and vehicle. It may also be termed as "associated commonplace" or "common ground".

Content schema: A reader's background knowledge which is related to the content area of a text (Carrell, 1987, p. 461).

Culture: "The patterned ways of life of a group of people", which represents the anthropological concept of culture as distinguished from the artistic achievement concept of culture (Tardif, 1978, p. 7)

Formal schema: Background knowledge which the reader uses to deal with the formal, rhetorical and organizational structure of a text (Carrell, 1987, p. 461).

Metaphor: Metaphor "refers to a set of linguistic processes in which one aspect of an object is transferred to another object, so that the second object is spoken of as if it were the first" (Mate and Malicky, 1990, p. 64).

Native speakers: This term is used to refer to the people whose mother tongue is the English language.

Non-native speakers: This term refers to the people for whom the English language is not their first language, but their second or foreign language.

Salience: "Degree of the prominence and relevance of a particular attribute which is used to discriminate between the terms of a metaphor" (Mate, 1987, p. 7).

Salience imbalance: "A condition in which the salience level of the matching attributes for the topic and the vehicle are perceived as unequal. The matching attribute is more salient for the topic and less salient for the vehicle resulting in directionality and a degree of diagonality from the vehicle to the topic" (Mate, 1987, p. 7).

Topic: "The first lexical item of a metaphorical expression which is elaborated upon by the second term of its domain, the vehicle" (Mate, 1987, p. 5). In the metaphor "Her eyes were candles", "eyes" is the topic. The topic may also be termed the "tenor", "main subject" or "a-term" of the metaphor.

Vehicle: The second lexical item of a metaphorical expression which contains new information about the less prototypical topic. In "Her eyes were candles", "candles" is the vehicle. The vehicle may also be termed as "b-term" or "subsidiary subject" of the metaphor.

1.9 ABBREVIATIONS

2LL	Second Language Learning
BBC:	The British Broadcasting Corporation
China:	The People's Republic of China
CPC:	The Communist Party of China
EFL:	English as a foreign language
ESL:	English as a second language
GRE:	Graduate Record Examination
GSA:	Graduate Students' Association
HUB:	Housing Union Building
IQ:	Intelligence Quotient
L1:	English as a first language
L2:	English as a second or foreign language
TL:	Target Language
TOEFL:	Test of English as a Foreign language
VOA:	Voice of America

1.10 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

1). The primary contribution of this study is to increase our understanding of the reading comprehension of ESL and EFL readers. This study will mainly focus on the factors that effect Chinese graduate students' and the Canadian graduate student's comprehension of metaphors in English language which is an area that had been ignored by many researchers. This study is aiming at filling the blank in the ESL/EFL reading literature.

2). The main purpose of learning a foreign language is to increase the effectiveness of communication among people from different cultures. Metaphor has an important role in language and cognition. For better communication among people of different languages and cultures, research to find out the factors affecting the comprehension is of vital importance.

3). Metaphor allows us to make a connection between what we know and what we do not know in an analogical fashion. It is undeniable that it has great value for pedagogy.

1.11 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of seven chapters. **CHAPTER TWO** presents a review on the concepts of metaphor, theories on metaphor, and relevant literature as background to this study. **CHAPTER THREE** describes the design of the research. It includes a description of the methodological procedures used for collecting data and analyzing it. **CHAPTER FOUR** provides background information on educational policies, and the English language learning environment in China during the two Chinese graduate students' early English language education. **CHAPTER FIVE** presents the descriptive data. **CHAPTER SIX** is a discussion of the data and the literature relevant to the major themes. **CHAPTER SEVEN** presents a brief review of the research and its conclusion.

Implications for English language instruction in China are drawn and recommendations for further research are made.

CHAPTER TWO: THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This part of the thesis is a brief review of the concept of metaphor, the leading theories and commonly accepted beliefs of the metaphor, with the emphasis being placed on Ortony's Salience Imbalance Hypothesis theory (1979) and its relation to schema or background knowledge. Substitution Theory, Comparison Theory, Interaction Theory and Similarity Theory provided the basis for the Salience Imbalance Hypothesis. Based upon the theoretical framework of the Salience Imbalance Hypothesis and the schema or background knowledge, some of the research questions of this study are proposed.

2.1.1 The Concept of Metaphor

Metaphor is an immensely pervasive and important phenomenon. Metaphor permeates our thought and language and makes it possible to relate our prior experiences to new and unfamiliar referents. Metaphor is also an immensely debatable phenomenon. Even to the definition of the term of "metaphor", there is great disagreement among the researchers and the English language teachers. In 1965, Whalley described the confusion on the definition of metaphor.

> The nature and definition of metaphorical terms and of the relations between them have both been matters for much speculation and disagreement... the metaphorical relation has been variously described as comparison, contrast analogy, fusion; and different views have been held regarding the nature, operation, and function of metaphor ...
> (Whalley, 1965, p. 490)

This confusion on the definition of metaphor makes the boundary of the concept quite vague. For one researcher, metaphor may broadly be designated as all languages, for another researcher it may be narrowly referred to as a statement made up by two logically dissimilar objects. Shibles (1971) is a perfect example of the first kind of researcher believing that language itself is symbolic in nature; therefore all languages are metaphorical. Another example of this kind of researcher is Berggren. He even extends the definition of metaphor from "a sentence or book" to "an artistic icon, a concrete physical model, or concrete diagram, or even a raised eyebrow" (Berggren, 1962, p. 238). Lakoff and Johnson in their very well known The Metaphor We Live By emphasize that the use of metaphors in our daily language is pervasive, that metaphors reflect our conceptual systems, and in significant ways that the metaphors we use determine or structure our experience of the social and the natural world.

> We have found ... that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.
>
> The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities.
> (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3)

In order to show how extensive the presence of metaphor in language is, Lakoff and Johnson identify hundreds of metaphors which are parts of our everyday speech. They believe that the "essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 5).

The researcher thinks all the above broad definitions of metaphor are too broad to be useful in this small investigation. If all languages, symbolic activities and cognitive activities, as many other researchers have pointed out, were all regarded as metaphors, then there would be an urgent need to invent another term for the type of language which we now call metaphor.

In the present study, the term "metaphor" will be limited to the simple literary "Subject is Predicate" or "Topic is Vehicle" type of metaphor. The researcher uses the term "metaphor" to refer to "a figure of speech containing an implied comparison of two objects in which aspects of one object are transferred to another object, so that the second object is spoken of as if it were the first" (Mate, 1987, p. 7). For instance, "The smoke from the forest fire was pea soup". In order to distinguish this type of metaphor from other types of metaphors traditionally being called as metaphors by other scholars or researchers, the researcher of this study uses the term "simple metaphor" to address the "topic is vehicle" type of metaphor, which is the focus of the present research.

Many different theories have been formulated to explain the comprehension of metaphor, but since the field of metaphor study is relatively new, no one theory dominates the thinking at the present time. Despite the differences in approach among the various theories, they all tend to use the same terminology developed by Richards (1936) to refer to the components or parts of the metaphor. In The Philosophy of Rhetoric (Richards, 1936), J. A. Richards states that a metaphor consists of "a topic" and "a vehicle". Topic, as defined by Mate, is "the first lexical item of a metaphorical expression which is elaborated upon by the second term of its domain, the vehicle" (Mate, 1987, p. 5). Vehicle is the second lexical item of the expression. It contains new information about the topic. The relationship between the topic and the vehicle is referred to by Richards as "the ground". In the metaphorical statement, "The smoke from the forest fire was pea soup", "smoke" is the topic; "pea soup" is the vehicle; and the ground of this metaphorical statement is the concept of "density" or "thickness". The term "tension" was also employed by Richards to indicate the literal inequivalency, or incompatibility between the topic and vehicle in a metaphorical statement. In this study, terminology offered by Richards, such as the ones mentioned above, i.e., topic, vehicle, tension, etc., will be employed by the researcher to describe the process of metaphorical comprehension throughout this research.

2.1.2 Theories and General Beliefs on Metaphor

Since the time of Aristotle, philosophers, psychologists, and linguists have proposed various definitions and theories to explain the nature and the function of metaphor in our language and our cognitive system. The following is a brief description of the major theories concerning the comprehension of metaphor.

1. The Substitution Theory

The definition of metaphor from Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1983) is "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another by way of suggesting a likeness or analogy between them...." (p. 746). Like many other standard dictionary definitions, this reflects the traditional Substitution Theory view of metaphor. For a long time, the Substitution Theory of metaphor was the theory most widely accepted by researchers and teachers. This theory postulates that the vehicle in the metaphorical statement is substituted for another literal meaning. For example, in the previous metaphorical sentence "The smoke from the forest fire was pea soup", the vehicle "pea soup" is substituted for the literal and underlying meaning of "thickness". The vehicle "pea soup" is considered to be an intruder term which has to be replaced by a literal term during the comprehension process. In other words, the reader must activate the substitution process and exchange "pea soup" with the concept of "thickness". In this view, understanding a metaphor is like solving a riddle. Metaphor may be used only because of a limitation of, or a gap in, the ordinary vocabulary. This characteristic of a metaphor is termed by Black (1962) as "catachresis". It means that a metaphor can give an old word a new sense. According to the Substitution Theory, the use of metaphors is merely for stylistic reasons or for the pleasure of solving the riddle of finding the literal meaning. This theory is being criticized because it cannot give explanation when more than one interpretation of a metaphor is possible. The Substitution theory treats metaphor merely as a device for literary embellishment. In other words, in this theory, metaphor is relegated to a minor role in language and cognition (Black, 1962).

2. The Comparison Theory

The Comparison Theory is an extension of the Substitution Theory. In the Comparison Theory, metaphors are viewed as implicit comparison of objects unlike in nature but possessing some common bonds (Readence, Baldwin, Martin, and O'Brien, 1984). In other words, according to this view, a metaphor involves a comparison of similarity between the topic and the vehicle. Aristotle also believed that metaphors are "implicit comparisons". According to this theory, metaphor is a condensed or elliptical simile, e.g., in the previous metaphorical statement "The smoke from the forest fire was pea soup" would mean "The smoke from the forest was like pea soup", "smoke" is being compared to "pea soup", two different ideas possessing at least one common attribute--the concept of "thickness". In agreement with this comparison view of metaphor is the idea that the meaning or the understanding of a metaphor is neither static nor lodged solely in the mind of the speaker or the writer. Rather, one single metaphor may have a number of legitimate interpretations depending upon different reader's comparisons of the topic and vehicle in the metaphorical statement. This is one of the contributions that this theory contributes to the understanding of metaphor. For instance, the previous metaphorical sentence, "The smoke from the forest fire was pea soup", could also be interpreted to mean that the smoke was nauseating. From this instance we can see, a single literal paraphrase of a metaphor, using the Substitution Theory, may miss some possible meanings of the metaphor. Another contribution of the Comparison Theory is its introduction of the notion of similarity which has proven to be a solid foundation for new research on the semantic features of the topic and the vehicle in a metaphor (Tversky, 1977; Ortony, 1979). But, this Comparison Theory fails to provide us with an illuminating understanding of how the effect of the vehicle will influence the meaning of the topic in the metaphorical sentence (Mate and Malicky, 1990).

3. The Interaction Theory

The Interaction Theory is another influential theory of metaphor. It was developed by Max Black in 1962 (Black, 1962, 1979). The comprehension process of metaphor, according to this theory, is "the metaphor selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject (topic) by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject (vehicle)" (Black, 1962, p. 44-45). In the description of this theory, Black (1962, 1979) acknowledges the idea that some metaphors may be just the substitutions or the comparison of ideas or concepts. However, Black also proposes that some metaphors can relate the attributes of the topic and the vehicle in a mutual interacting way to create new meaning. Black (1962) views the interactive approach to metaphor comprehension as an interplay of the topic and the vehicle. According to this view, a "eureka" effect occurs when the reader blends the attributes of the topic and vehicle to create a new meaning (Haynes, 1975). This interactionist view assumes that an interaction between the attributes of the topic and vehicle can happen during the comprehension of metaphor, but its vague explanation of how metaphorical meaning comes into being brings much criticism on its validity.

4. The Similarity Theory

The Similarity Theory is another theory of metaphorical processing which was proposed by Tversky (1977). This theory, is based on the traditional notion that satisfactory comprehension of metaphors, in many ways, involves the principles of similarity because metaphors are based on the similarity comparison (or commonly called an "implicit comparison" between the two subjects in the metaphorical statement). In this theory, Tversky extends the concept of similarity by examining the specific features or attributes of the objects being compared to the field of semantics. Tversky specifically states that the degree of semantic similarity between two objects is the result of what the two objects have in common minus the attributes or features that may be distinctive within each separate object. The contribution of this theory is that "it gives rise to the notion that nonliteral similarity statements may be defined by the relative salience of attributes shared within and across the domains of the topic and vehicle in a metaphor" (Mate, 1987).

5. Salience Imbalance Hypothesis

Ortony, Reynolds, and Arter (1979) note that metaphor has a more wide application in language and communication than the above theories suggest. They argue that metaphor allows the communication of ideas which cannot be expressed literally, and supplies the possibility of communicating a more vivid impression of an idea. In order to account for this more prominent role that metaphor plays in language and cognition, Ortony (1979) based his ideas upon the Similarity Theory and proposed a model of nonliteral similarity that provides the basis of a metaphor comprehension theory which was commonly referred to as "the Salience Imbalance Hypothesis". Two types of similarity have been identified by Ortony. They are literal similarity and nonliteral similarity. Literal similarity refers to cases where "two objects are viewed as literally similar when their shared features (attributes) are highly salient (important) to both terms of the statement" (Mate, 1987, p. 6). If the shared attributes of the two terms are of unequal salience or prominence, the statement will be viewed as nonliteral similarity. For example, in the following two sentences.

1). Billboards are placards.

2). Tom's mouth is the Grand Canyon.

To most people, "billboards" and "placards" in the first sentence are subjects which share many mutually salient attributes or subschemata. Most people will regard the topic and the vehicle in the first sentence as a literal comparison. In the second sentence, the situation is very different. Most people will regard this sentence as a nonliteral similarity statement because to most people "mouth" and "the Grand Canyon" are not exactly alike. "Mouth" is an important organ of the human body, while "the Grand Canyon" is a geographical location. These two subjects do not readily share mutually prominent or salient attributes. If the reader tries to understand this sentence literally, the sentence will not make any sense.

According to the Salience Imbalance Hypothesis theory (Ortony, 1979), a meaningful comprehension of metaphor can be accomplished under the following conditions:

> The terms in a nonliteral similarity statement, the topic and vehicle, must have matching attributes which are of unequal salience, or prominence, for the two terms.
>
> The salience imbalance between matching attributes must be directional. Specifically, the matching attribute must be more salient in the vehicle than in the topic. This is referred to as the 'low/high condition'.
>
> In addition to the low/high condition, a nonliterality statement must also have matching attributes which are nontrivial.
> (Baldwin, Luce, and Readence, 1982, p. 531-532)

Now, let us have a close look at the second sentence.

Tom's mouth is the Grand Canyon.

To most people, mouth and the Grand Canyon have the following attributes:

Mouth	the Grand Canyon
a) you eat with it	a) very beautiful
b) used in speaking	b) is big
c) has a tongue	c) is a national monument
d) could have bad breath	d) is in Arizona
.	.
.	.
.	.
i) some people have big ones	i) animals live there

In the above illustration, the topic "mouth" and the vehicle "the Grand Canyon" do share some matching attributes, such as the concept of "big". The salience of the concept "big" in the topic "mouth" is very low, while in the vehicle "the grand Canyon" it is quite high. As it is shown on the above attribute mapping, the concept of "big" is more salient in the vehicle "the Grand Canyon" than it is in the topic "mouth". In addition to this, the matching attributes of these two subjects are not trivial. Therefore, most people will be able to understand this metaphorical sentence (Ortony, 1979).

The process of metaphor comprehension, in the Salience Imbalance Hypothesis includes:

1. Recognition of contextual anomaly.
2. Establishment of metaphoric tension.
3. Identification of the appropriate matching attributes.
4. Promotion of attribute.

(Baldwin, Luce, and Readence, 1982, p. 532)

"Recognition of contextual anomaly" requires the reader to identify if the sentence that he or she encountered is a literal statement or is a nonliteral statement. "Establishment of metaphoric tension" means that the reader had identified that the sentence that he or she is facing is a nonliteral similarity statement and had recognized the literal inequivalency, or incompatibility between the topic and vehicle but not as "an anomalous element in the text" (Baldwin, Luce, and Readence, 1982, p. 532). After the "identification of the appropriate matching attributes" is the "Promotion of attribute". It means the matching attribute or sets of attributes in the vehicle moving from higher salience to lower salience in the topic in order that the topic in the sentence will adopt the attribute or sets of attributes of the vehicle as the sentence meaning. For example, in the metaphorical statement "Tom's mouth is the Grand Canyon", the meaning of the metaphorical statement can come out only under the condition that the salient attribute "big" in "the Grand Canyon" moves to the lower salient attribute "some people have big ones" in "mouth".

Central to Ortony's theory is the notion that the matching attributes between the topic and the vehicle in a metaphorical statement must be salient in the vehicle. Support of this notion came from research by Evan and Gamble (1987).

6. The "Frozen" or "Dead" Metaphor

The metaphors that Searle (1979) calls "dead metaphors" are described by Ortony (1977) as "Frozen metaphors" or "Fossilized metaphors". Ortony not only gave these types of metaphor fancy names, but also made a distinction between the "frozen" or "fossilized" and the "novel" metaphor. While defining the distinction between the two terms, he suggests that it is useful to think of them not as discrete types of metaphor, but as a continuum with frozen or dead metaphors at one end and novel metaphors at the other end. Ortony defined "frozen" or "dead" metaphor as "metaphors that at one time were novel but through consistent use have become integrated into the language" (Ortony, 1979, p. 8). Phrases like "head of state", "the leg of the table" and "fit as a fiddle" are good examples of the frozen metaphors. Sometimes, the meaning of the frozen metaphor cannot be understood literally or nonliterally because the ground of the topic and the vehicle have been lost over time. In contrast, Ortony states that the true novel metaphor should constitute a novel contribution by the speaker to the richness of his or her language (Ortony, 1979). Ortony further delineates that most metaphors we use everyday in our language probably lie somewhere in the middle of the continuum rather than at either of the extremes (Ortony, 1979). When a metaphor becomes "dead" or "frozen", the reader of the metaphor does not need to identify the appropriate matching attributes between the topic and the vehicle and to promote the salient attribute in the vehicle. He or she will simply accept it as a new vocabulary item. In a "dead" or "frozen" metaphor, just as Turbayne observed,

> ...we no longer make believe that camels are dogs, that sounds are vibrations, etc. Camels are now nothing but dogs; sounds are nothing but vibrations, and the human body is nothing but a machine. What had before been models, are now taken for the things modeled.
> (Turbayne, 1970, p. 26)

7. Can Metaphor be Stated Literally?

Generally, literal statements are either literally true or literally false. They are "word to fact" expressions. We do not need to interpret them word by word for hidden meanings. For instance, in the literal statement "She is tall", we mean physically that "She is tall" unless we try to conceal that fact to give fake information. While, metaphorical statements are quite different. They do not have a "word to fact" relation in their statements. If they were interpreted literally by the reader, the reader will find that the meaning of the statement would be either false or does not make sense. They are meaningful utterances only when they are under the condition that the reader will construct a metaphorical interpretation. Metaphors are very unique language phenomena because they can be literally meaningless or false but at the same time can be metaphorically meaningful. For centuries, metaphors have provided a vehicle for playwrights, novelists, poets and educators who use metaphors as a vehicle to create novel concepts and fresh images. They have provided the speakers or writers with a convenient and flexible tool which is not available in ordinary literal expressions. In order to understand the concept and the working of metaphor, we have to deal with the question of whether metaphors can be stated literally.

There is general agreement among the researchers on metaphor comprehension that the translations of metaphorical expressions to literal expression are impossible (Richards, 1938; Black, 1962; Perrine, 1971; Grinder and Elgin, 1973; Ortony, 1975; Ortony, Reynolds, and Arter, 1979). Richards (1938) indicates that an effective metaphor will include many aspects of communication, such as sense, implication, emotions, and the attitude of the writer or the speaker. He believes that one of the above aspects of metaphor maybe could be appropriately translated or paraphrased, but the combination of all the above aspects which are the essentials that make the metaphor a unique expression cannot be adequately translated or paraphrased. A very similar viewpoint held by Perrine (1971) is that the literal paraphrase or translation cannot grasp the essence and the emotion of a metaphor at the same time. Black (1962) holds the view that some metaphors can be substituted with a literal meaning, and some metaphors' meaning can be paraphrased through a comparison of the topic and the vehicle. This paraphrase or translation of metaphor will risk a loss of the original style and the beauty of the metaphor, but without damage to cognitive and literal meaning. Black also considered the fact that the literal translation or paraphrase will reproduce too much or too little of the original metaphor and might place the original emphasis wrongly. Ortony, Reynolds, and Arter (1979) add that metaphor allows the communication of ideas which cannot be expressed literally, and supplies the possibility of communicating a more vivid impression of an idea.

Ortony (1975) believes that metaphors are not used to transmit one characteristic or attribute only of their two major components (topic and vehicle), literal translation or paraphrase of metaphor will surely loose some of the other characteristics which the metaphor tries to convey. Ortony seems to agree with Black that the translation of metaphor will suffer the loss of some characteristics but without the loss of cognitive content. Ortony's viewpoint appears to indicate that the real use of metaphor is to convey several common attributes. Ortony strongly believes that metaphor is particular useful in teaching and educational writing since he regards it as an "essential ingredient of communication" (Ortony, 1975, p. 45).

Metaphors are heavily used in literature, especially in poetry. The language that poets use in poetry, as Grinder (1973) points out, is highly compressed and it cannot be paraphrased without suffering the loss of the original meaning. The extensive use of metaphor in poetry is mostly due to the fact that a great number of images or meanings can be expressed very briefly and very vividly through its use. Usually in a poem, as we know, poets will not only use many metaphors but also will use them in a way that one is embedded within another. This use of metaphor makes the job of literal translation much more complex and difficult.

Of course, the above statements do not mean to conclude that people should not attempt to interpret or explain a particular metaphor. Black (1962) confirms the value of the elaboration and probing on a metaphor. He believes that the elaboration and probing on a metaphor will help language teachers and researchers gain more insight into the workings of metaphors. Researchers and teachers within or outside Canada need to help their ESL or EFL students comprehend the figurative language used in English. This will involve questioning, explaining and translating some metaphors in order to locate the factors that influence their comprehension of metaphors in English.

8. Linguistic Context and Metaphor Comprehension

Most of the recent research (Black, 1962; Smith, 1973; Verbrugge and McCarrel, 1977; Ortony, 1977; Vosniadou, 1989) on the effects of the context of metaphor on comprehension has mainly focused on the linguistic context. The linguistic context, as defined by Vosniadou, refers to "the common ground created on the basis of the speaker's and the listener's previous linguistic communication: what has been said or what can be inferred on the basis of what has been said" (Vosniadou, 1989, p. 160). It has been shown that the linguistic context of the metaphor plays an important role in metaphor comprehension.

Black (1962) indicates that the linguistic context will limit the interaction between the topic and the vehicle that a reader might have when confronting a metaphor. Smith (1973) suggests in his research that children who had paid more attention to the linguistic context could produce better interpretations of the target metaphors. Verbrugge and McCarrel (1977) hold the view that the difficulty that the readers have in interpreting the metaphors may be associated with the amount of the given linguistic context.

2.1.3 The Salience Imbalance Hypothesis, Schema, and Culture

1. Theoretical Constructs of the Salience Imbalance Hypothesis

As Evans and Gamble (1987) point out, Ortony's Salience Imbalance Hypothesis mainly "rests on two main constructs: knowledge representations and salience" (Evans, and Gamble, 1987, p. 436). Knowledge representation, according to Evans and Gamble, is "schemata, and contain sub-schemata which, in turn, represent the various attributes of a given concept" (Evans, and Gamble, 1987, p. 436). Their definition of schemata is consistent with what we commonly believe schemata is, i.e., "a data structure for representing knowledge about all concepts stored in long term memory" (Mate, 1987, p. 8). Schemata contain sub-schemata which refers to knowledge structure representing the various attributes or features of a given concept or notion. According to the schema theory, concepts or notions differ from each other because certain subschemata, or slots, or attributes of their schemata are present in one concept, but they are not present in the other. In the context of this study, it is reasonable to conclude that the topic and the vehicle can have features or attributes and this can be explained by schema theory as well. Salience is being defined by Evans and Gamble as the reader's estimation of the degree of prominence and relevance of a particular attribute which is used to discriminate between the terms of a metaphor (Evans, and Gamble, 1987).

2. Culture, schema and reading research

Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert and Goetz (1976) believed that, "Every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world" (Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert and Goetz, 1976, p. 6). They theorized that readers' ideational and vocational schemata affect interpretations of text. In a study conducted to test this hypothesis, thirty male and thirty female students were presented with two passages. Each passage was structured so that more than one interpretation was possible. Passage one could reasonably be understood as a prisoner planning his escape from prison or a wrestler attempting to free himself from his or her opponent's hold. The second passage might be seen to describe a game of card playing or the rehearsal session of a woodwind ensemble. The male participants were selected from the weight lifting class and had shown a great interest in wrestling. The female students were those who were preparing to enter a career in music. The results of this study indicate that most subjects made judgments related to their vocational and ideational schemata and were unaware of the alternative possible interpretation of the text.

Another important component of an individual's world knowledge or schema is one's knowledge of his or her own cultural heritage. A lot of research has been done on this topic. One early report on cross cultural reading research was done by Bartlett (1932). He observed the processes of English as first language speakers read and recalled stories based on North American Indian folk tales. He recognized the effects of cultural differences in the comprehension process of the texts.

Fifty years later, Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson (1979) conducted a study of similar nature. They investigated the influence of culture on recall and interpretation of texts containing great cultural significance. The participants of their study were a group of American university students and a group of Indian university students in India. They had approximately equal male and female in participation. Both groups were presented with two letters to read. One letter described an Indian wedding, the other was about an American wedding. It was hypothesized at the onset that the background knowledge and different cultural heritage would result in great differences in the assessments of the letters' comprehension. To a large extent, the researchers' hypotheses were found to be true. First, the speed of reading and recall of information were greater when the students were dealing with culturally familiar material than with culturally unfamiliar material. Modifications and distortions of the text in the participants' comprehension responses were also observed. Americans are accustomed to having the bride and her family dominate the planning and execution of this important event. However, for the Indian students, the perspective was quite different. The groom's family is in charge, and the financial arrangements reflect the status of the groom's family. Thus, when the American letter described the bride as wearing her grandmother's wedding gown, it was viewed by the American students as a positive expression of traditional values. One Indian student, however, made the following comment: "She was looking allright except the dress was too old and out of fashion." The American interpreted the Indian statement concerning financial offerings to the groom's family--"Gifts to the in-laws"--as an "exchange of gifts".

Another common error was made by Indian subjects when they referred to the bride's ring as having been given to her by her family, rather than purchased by the groom. The evaluation of the Indian bride's family by the Indian students was "nice enough people", but the American students only gave them faint praise. An Indian marriage does not usually culminate in a honeymoon. Instead, it presages that the couple will establish residence in the home of the groom's parents. The Americans perceived the Indian couple's trip to Nagpur as a honeymoon. The Indian readers assessed the situation correctly; the bride was headed to her in-law's home. In this study, we can see that language is subject to cultural interpretation to the extent that relevant meaning is lost due to the lack of necessary cultural schemata.

Research (Xiu-Bai, 1983) evinces that background knowledge or cultural schemata to a large extent can determine the lexical connotations of a word. A paper by Xiu-Bai deals with the cross-cultural problems encountered by Chinese students who learn English as a foreign language. In this paper, the author states that even when the denotational meaning of a word is similar in two different cultures, the culturally based connotations of the word may cause misunderstanding or confusion. Words like "authority" or "indoctrinate" are good examples to illustrate this point. A native speaker of English language may say "the authorities of the government" or "the authorities of the school" without attaching any pejorative sense to the word, but its Chinese equivalent DANGJU is usually used as a derogatory word. A Chinese student of English would naturally refer to his "government authorities" as "government leaders"; he or she would address his or her "school authorities" whom he or she favors as "school leaders" or "heads of the school". As influenced by this concept of the word in the Chinese language, the Chinese students would naturally regard the English word "authorities" as having a pejorative meaning. The influence of culture on the semantic meaning of language is great.

3. Theoretical Background for some of the Research Questions

According to Ortony (1979) and others, a metaphor is not a literal statement; in order to be understood, it must be perceived as nonliteral. They believe that in order to discover the intended meaning of a metaphor, the reader must find out the similarity between the topic and the vehicle in the statement. Topic and vehicle in a metaphor, as they believe must share some common attributes, features or sub-schemata. Ortony (1980) elaborates on the concept of attribute (or semantic features, sub-schemata) to include "properties known or generally believed to be true of the things being compared, attitudes towards them, and beliefs about them" (Ortony, 1980, p. 12). Thus, it is possible, where belief structures (cultural, religious, political structure) differ, for a sentence or a statement perceived by one person as metaphorically comprehensible may be perceived as incomprehensible by another person with different experience or from a different culture, religion, a political entity. The common attributes of the topic and the vehicle must be present in the reader's mind in order to understand the metaphorical statements. Cultural background is a crucial area from which these commonalities are derived. From the above theoretical foundations, some research questions of this study were proposed.

2.2 A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the year 1990, Lindstromberg stated in her Metaphor and ESP: A ghost in the machine? (Lindstromberg, 1990) that general literature on metaphor research was gigantic, but in the field of ESL or EFL, the situation was very different. She further indicated that at that time no course book for ESL or EFL was available that dealt with metaphor in a systematic fashion and there were no grammar handbooks (i.e., Alexander, 1987; Allsop, 1983; Jesperson, 1976; Leech, 1989; and Swan, 1980) or teacher's resource books on vocabulary teaching (i.e., Wallace, 1982; and Gairns and Redmen, 1986) for ESL or EFL that had mentioned or discussed the topic of metaphor. Trosborg (1985) also acknowledged the fact that "With the shift to communicative language teaching and learning, a lot of attention has been given to the pragmatic functions of language but figurative language is still neglected" (Trosborg, 1985, p. 526). Because of the above fact, this paper will review the research of metaphor in first language research in the expectation that this will provide an understanding of metaphor comprehension of the ESL or EFL readers. The gigantic body of literature on first language metaphor research in the educational setting mainly focuses on the following areas: the development of metaphorical understanding and metaphor comprehension, and metaphor in the learning processes.

2.2.1 Studies of the Development of Metaphorical Understanding and Metaphor Comprehension

Research done on children's understanding of metaphor mainly examines children of different age groups and their abilities to use and interpret metaphors and the development of children's metaphorical ability. Some researches evince that children can process metaphorical tasks at very a young age. In a research study, Gentner (1977) asked a group of children aged four to five years, and a group of college students, to draw elements of faces onto inanimate objects. This task was metaphorical in nature. The study shows that both the children and the college students did well with tasks of this kind. Therefore, Gentner concludes that children at a young age do have metaphorical ability. Similar results were found in the research of Honeck, Sowry, and Voegtle (1978) and Vosniadou and Ortony (1983). In general, the research on metaphor comprehension indicates that children's ability to understand metaphor increases with age (Asch and Nerlove, 1960; Billow, 1975; Demorest, Silberstein, Gardner, and Winner, 1983). In Metaphoric Processing in the Mature Years (1979), Boswell presents evidence for a qualitative difference on metaphor comprehension between high school students and mature adults. In his study, thirty adults and thirty-one high school students were asked to comprehend the same metaphorical task. The high school students' explanations of metaphors were mostly analytic in nature, while the adults' showed a synthesizing, integrative perspective. Ortony, Reynolds, and et al. (1978) disagree with this view; they suggest that the reason that children's ability to understand metaphor increases with age might be that with the increase of age other types of knowledge (i.e., vocabulary sub-schemata) increase as well. That is to say, children's performance differences on metaphor among different ages is due to factors besides children's innate ability to understand metaphorical task. Other research studies supporting this view show that when children are given formal instruction in metaphor use, their ability to use and understand metaphorical language increases (Horne, 1966; Pollio and Pollio, 1974).

2.2.2 Studies of Metaphor in the Learning Process

Several empirical study results support the view that metaphor is of great importance in learning. Ortony (1980) believes that metaphorical language plays an important role in learning and in scientific discovery. Mayer (1975) found that analogical models of computer programming functions could facilitate poor ability students' learning of the programming. Later, Mayer (1980) taught a file-management computer language to two groups of students. With one group, he employed metaphorical instruction, while with the other, he employed nonmetaphorical instruction. After the completion of the course, he compared the performance of the two groups and found that the metaphorical instruction group performed better than the other. Similarly, Reynolds and Schwartz (1983) found that gist recall (the recall of main points of a text) of passages containing metaphorical conclusion statements was superior to gist recall of the same passages containing literal concluding statements. In conclusion, previous research results support Ortony, Reynolds, and Arter's statements (1979) that metaphor allows the communication of ideas which cannot be expressed literally, and supplies the possibility of communicating a more vivid impression of an idea. Metaphor does have a more prominent role in language and cognition.

2.3 THE SUMMARY OF THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Metaphor is an immensely debatable phenomenon in language and cognition. Historically, it has been studied from a wide range of disciplines and viewpoints. Even today, there are several new theories concerning the operation of metaphor. Ortony's Salience Imbalance Theory of metaphor (1979) is among the most recent metaphor theories. According to Ortony, semantic features of the topic and vehicle and their similarity occupy a vital role in explaining the comprehension process of metaphor. The shared attributes between the topic and the vehicle are viewed as salient for the vehicle and less salient for the topic. This inequality in salience of the shared attributes is termed as salience imbalance and is considered to be the basis for metaphor comprehension. The condition for metaphor comprehension, as postulated by Ortony, is the low/high condition rather than high/low condition. Low/high condition is referred to where the shared attribute is perceived as low salient for the topic and highly salient for the vehicle. High/low condition is referred to where the shared attribute is perceived as low salient for the vehicle and highly salient for the topic.

Commonly accepted beliefs on metaphor includes the following viewpoints: 1) Two kinds of metaphor exist in language, one is "Frozen", and the other is "Novel". Most metaphors occurring in everyday language lie somewhere in the middle of the continuum between frozen and novel. 2) The translation or interpretation of metaphor is not possible. The endeavor to interpret or translate a metaphor will suffer the loss of original meaning and style. However, attempts to elaborate or interpret a particular metaphor in the educational setting will help the language teachers or researchers to gain more insight into the operations of metaphor. 3) Linguistic context of the metaphor plays an important role in metaphor comprehension.

Research on metaphor comprehension shows that children possess metaphoric ability and can use figurative language at very a young age. There is a qualitative difference on metaphor comprehension between young children and mature adults. It has also been shown that metaphor allows the communication of ideas which cannot be expressed literally, and supplies the possibility of communicating a more vivid impression of an idea.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Guba (1981) suggests that there are many paradigms that researchers can employ to arrive at the "truth". He states the following:

> There is no basis for choosing one of these paradigms over others in each and every inquiry situation. Rather, each rests on certain assumptions which must be tested in the context of application. Just as it is proper to select that analytic statistic whose assumptions are best met by a set of data, so is it proper to select that paradigm whose assumptions are best met by the phenomenon being investigated.
> (Guba, 1981, p. 76)

Assumptions about knowing and knowledge underlying a qualitative (naturalistic) research paradigm are fundamentally different from those underpinning a quantitative (rationalistic) research paradigm. In the above quotation, Guba is indicating that the researcher should first identify the assumptions underpinning the paradigm that he or she had selected to see whether those assumptions can be met by the phenomenon under investigation before the start of any piece of research. Guba (1981) and Locke (1989) identify three most salient assumptions underlying the qualitative research paradigm and claim that it is those assumptions which make the qualitative research fundamentally different from quantitative research.

The first basic assumption underlying the qualitative research paradigm is that reality is a multiple phenomenon. The researchers in the qualitative research paradigm believe that there is no single reality in the social world upon which inquiry can converge. The social world, as they believe, consists only as a set of multiple realities with behavior driven by people's moment to moment personal vision of the world (Locke, 1989; Guba, 1981). But they also believe that people all share some degree of intersubjective overlapping of their individual, very personal realities. This overlapping is due to the collective social life, but also, as indicated by Locke, it is closely bound to a particular time, a particular place, and a particular individual (Locke, 1989). Therefore, "they are never perfectly congruent and, as lovers and parents sadly learn, they are never perfectly shared" (Locke, 1989, p. 4). Therefore, a qualitative inquiry or research will "diverge rather than converge as more and more is known, and that all 'parts' of reality are interrelated so that the study of any one part necessarily influences all other parts" (Guba, 1981, p. 77).

The second assumption is based on the nature of the relationship between the researcher (or inquirer) and the research object. The researchers in the qualitative research paradigm believe that the inquirer-subject relationship is interactive. The Quantitative research rests on the assumption that the researcher can maintain a distance from the objects of the study. That is to say that the relationship between the researcher and the objects under study is basically one of independence. The qualitative research, on the contrary, recognizes that the inquirer and the respondents must interact and that in so doing each influences the other (Guba, 1981). Knowing, in the qualitative paradigm, "requires some forms of active involvement with people" (Locke, 1989, p. 4). For example, in order to uncover the factors that affect an ESL or EFL student's reading comprehension of some metaphorical sentences in English language, the researcher must actually be present to observe the reading process when the student engaged himself or herself in the reading process.

The third assumption of qualitative research is on the nature of "true statements". The quantitative research paradigm is based on the assumption that time-enduring and context-free generalizations are possible. It is frequently asserted by the researchers in the quantitative research paradigm that inquiry would have no point if time-enduring and context-free generalizations could not be made. The qualitative research paradigm rests on the assumptions that generalizations are impossible and at best what the researchers can hope for are "working hypotheses" that closely relate to a specific context. The goal of the qualitative research paradigm is to develop "idiographic knowledge, focusing on differences between objects as frequently and with as much interest as on similarities" (Guba, 1981, p. 77). In the qualitative research paradigm, the researchers assert that inquiry cannot be regarded as value-free due to the involvement of human factors in social sciences (Locke, 1989). Research in social sciences is done by human beings not by sanitized inhuman robots, the result must be value-bounded.

In this study, the researcher examined the comprehension of metaphor and tried to find answers to the following questions:

1. Are cultural factors the main ones influencing comprehension of simple metaphors in English language for the Chinese students?
2. Is English language proficiency a factor influencing comprehension of simple metaphors in English language for the Chinese students?
3. Is the level of cognitive development a factor influencing comprehension of simple metaphors in English language for the Chinese students?
4. Is individual experience the main source from which the interpretations of simple metaphors in English language was drawn for the Canadian student and the two Chinese students?
5. What other factors affect the Chinese graduate students' and the Canadian graduate student's understanding of the simple metaphors in English language?
6. What implications can be drawn from these case studies for the teaching of comprehension of simple metaphors in English language and for the teaching of English language to the Chinese students in China?

Finding the answers to the above questions required the researcher to conduct an in-depth investigation on the comprehender's academic background, reading process and reading strategies while reading simple metaphors in English language. To uncover the many deep, very powerful, yet at the same time subtle components which contributed to the comprehension of metaphors in English, a qualitative (or naturalistic) research approach was chosen. The qualitative research, as pointed out by Patton,

> is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting--what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting--and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting... The analysis strives for depth of understanding. (Patton, 1985, p. 1)

The characteristics of qualitative research as summarized by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) are:

> (1) Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
> (2) Qualitative research is descriptive.
> (3) Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.
> (4) Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
> (5) Meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.
> (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992)

A qualitative approach of investigation is appropriate to my research because this approach seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. It also encourages descriptive and comprehensive data collection, explanation and documentation, extension of insight and meaning, and inductive reasoning to arrive at the discovery of new relationships, concepts, and understanding (Merriam, 1988).

3.2 CASE STUDY

The term Case Study is used in a variety of ways. It has a long history of use in disciplines such as medicine, law, anthropology, political science, psychology. Typically they are intensive investigations of single cases which serve both to identify and describe basic phenomena, as well as provide the basis for subsequent theory-development. Smith states that the assumptions underlying the use of case studies are similar to those of the qualitative research paradigm. Smith observes that,

> the context has great impact on social behavior ... the subjectivity of the researcher is not only inevitable but provides the only means of knowing, and control is instituted through multiple perspectives and methods.
> (Smith, 1982, p. 205)

More recently, it has been seen that "education has recognized the advantage of using a case study approach for better understanding the process or dynamics of certain aspects of practice" (Merriam, 1985, p. 204). As one form of qualitative research methodology, Stake defines the case study as the study of a bounded system, emphasizing the unity and wholeness of that system, but confined to those aspects which are relevant to the research problem at the time (Stake, 1978). In other words, a case study in education is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, a student, a learning process, or a class. The bounded system, or case is selected because it is an instance drawn from a class or a group (Adelman, Jenkins, and Kemmis, 1983). The importance of the case study as identified by Stake is,

> because of the universality and importance of experiential understanding, and because of their compatibility with such understanding, case studies can be expected to continue to have epistemological advantage over other inquiry methods as a basis for naturalistic generalization.
> (Stake, 1978, p. 7)

Merriam describes the attributes of case studies as: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive in her book: Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach (Merriam, 1988). Particularistic, according to Merriam,

> means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent.
> (Merriam, 1988, p. 11)

To the understanding of the researcher, this characteristic requires the researchers to concentrate their attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems and taking a holistic view of the situation while conducting a case study. Descriptive, according to Merriam means that the final product of a case study should be a rich thick description of the phenomenon being studied. The thick description, according to Merriam, is a complete, literal description of the incident or entity under investigation (Merriam, 1988). The style of description of qualitative case studies, as Wilson points out, is usually literary. Case studies use prose and other literary devices to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations (Wilson, 1979). By the term heuristic, Merriam means that case studies can develop the reader's understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 1988). This characteristic echoed Stake's view of case study,

> Previously unknown relationships and variables can be expected to emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied. Insights into how things get to be the way they are can be expected to result from case studies.
> (Stake, 1981, p. 47)

Inductive is the term that Merriam uses to mean that the case studies rely heavily on inductive reasoning.

In summary, the factors that can influence the two Chinese graduate students might be numerous and might be strictly bounded to the specific research participant. Thus, treating the two participants as two different single, bounded systems, and each described in his or her own specific context is the proper design to handle this ado. In a case study, the researcher attempts to examine an individual or a phenomenon in great depth. He or she tries to discover all the variables that are important to the understanding of the proposed problem. The emphasis of case study, as pointed out by Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, is on uncovering why the individual under study does what he or she does and how his or her behavior changes under different environments (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 1972). Case study is suitable for my focus of the research problem because this method enables a deeper and broader understanding of the problems being investigated.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION: THE INTERVIEWS, THE SIMPLE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TASK, THE PILOT STUDY, THE PROCEDURES AND THE DATA ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Interview

Interview is one of the common means of collecting qualitative data (Merriam, 1985). In this study, in-depth interview was chosen as one of the methods for data collection. The purpose of an interview, according to Patton, is to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind". He further explains,

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe..... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world--we have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interview, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.
> (Patton, 1980, p. 196)

Dexter also indicates that interview is one of the most preferred methods of data collection. He suggests that interview can provide better data and more data to the researcher and it can provide data at less cost than other methods (Dexter, 1970).

The three types of interview as identified by Berg (1989) are the standardized (formal) interview, the unstandardized (informal) interview, and the semistandardized (guided-semistructured) interview. The type of interview that the researcher employed in this study was the semistandardized interview. This type of interview, involves the utilization of a number of predetermined questions. It was conducted in the following manner,

> a systematic and consistent order, but allows the interviewers sufficient freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions.
> (Berg, 1989, p. 17)

The essential questions, according to Berg, are questions which only focus on the central problem of the study (Berg, 1989). The essential question of this study is, "What are the factors influencing the comprehension of simple metaphors in English language?". It is an open-ended question, by using this the researcher was aiming to elicit authentic responses from the participants on the factors influencing metaphor comprehension. In this research, some probing questions such as "Could you tell me more about that?", "Why do you say that?" were asked. Probing questions, as defined by Berg, are questions that can,

> provide interviewers with a way to draw out more complete stories from subjects. Probes frequently ask subjects to elaborate on what they have already answered in response to a given question.
> (Berg, 1989, p. 22)

In order to ask right and better probing questions, the researcher considered the following procedures suggested by Bergess during the interview,

> First, it is essential to listen carefully in order to participate in the conversation, to pose particular questions on topics that have not been covered or need developing. Secondly, it is important not to interrupt the person or persons who are being interviewed... Thirdly, interviewers need to monitor their own comments, gestures and actions as they may advance or impede the interview. Finally interviewers need to ensure that similar topics are covered in interviews where the data are to be used to make comparisons.
> (Bergess, 1984, p. 111)

Some structured research questions had to be asked as well. While formulating the interview questions, the researcher adhered to the following guidelines suggested by Denzin.

> Questions should accurately convey meaning to the respondent; they should motivate him to become involved and to communicate clearly his attitudes and opinions; they should be clear enough so that the interviewer can easily convey meaning to the respondent; they should be precise enough to exactly convey what is expected of the respondent...; any specific question should have as a goal the discerning of a response pattern that clearly fits the broad contents of the investigation...; if questions raise the possibility of the respondent's lying or fabricating (which is always a possibility), care should be taken to include questions that catch him up, or reveal to him and the interviewer that his previous answers have been incorrect.
> (Dezin, 1970, p. 129)

3.3.2 Simple Metaphor Comprehension Tasks

In this study, the researcher employed eleven metaphorical statements which were selected from Evans and Gamble's (1988), Roshkow's (1988), Radencich and Baldwin's (1985) metaphor comprehension research. All the metaphorical sentences were in the form of "a topic" was "a vehicle" and were embedded in very simple contexts in order that the readers could utilize the very limited context cues to interpret the metaphors. For instance, in the metaphor "Police are hawks on the highway", "Police" is the topic, and "hawks" is the vehicle, and "on the highway" is the context. The purpose the researcher had in employing these metaphors was to use them as examples to demonstrate to the participant what simple metaphors in English language look like in order that the researcher could elicit better and more correct information from the participants on their comprehension during interviews on their perspectives. The participants were asked to actually comprehend and interpret them orally, and finally they were asked to explain why they interpreted them that way. By doing this, the researcher was aiming to uncover the factors influencing the participants' comprehension on simple metaphors in English language. The eleven simple metaphorical statements in the English language chosen from the pilot study for this research are in **APPENDIX A.**

Besides the simple metaphor comprehension task, the researcher employed a metaphorical statement which had a bigger context in later interviews with the three participants. This little passage had been used by Hunsberger (1978) in her research on metaphor comprehension. Before the actual execution of the study, the researcher asked two Chinese graduate students and two Canadian students to read this little passage to see the appropriateness of this instrument. Results showed that this was an appropriate instrument because it could elicit different interpretations from the Chinese students and the Canadian students. The researcher employed this to find out how the larger context could influence metaphor comprehension.

3.3.3 Pilot Study

Before the main study, the researcher conducted a pilot study to select some simple metaphors. First, the researcher chose twenty-three metaphorical statements from Evans and Gamble's (1988), and Roshkow's (1988), Radencich and Baldwin's (1985) metaphor comprehension research. Metaphors once used in metaphor comprehension research, were shown and were judged by the previous researchers, the present researcher and two faculty members of the University to be in the middle of the continuum between the "novel" and "dead" metaphors. The researcher then asked twenty Canadian graduate students and five Chinese graduate students to write their interpretation of each one. From the fifteen Canadian graduate students' responses and the five Chinese graduate students' responses, the researcher chose eleven metaphorical statements. The criteria for choosing these were: first, the Canadian students must be able to give unified interpretations for each one in order to provide the researcher with information about common interpretations of these metaphors in this community. This also indicated whether the context cues were sufficient for the native speakers of English, in this linguistic community, to understand these simple metaphors. Secondly, the researcher expected that for some of these simple metaphors, there should be a difference in interpretation between the Canadian students and the Chinese students. The researcher believed that only those metaphors which could illustrate clearly a difference between how the Chinese students would interpret and how the English students would interpret would provide a basis for the researcher to explore the factors influencing the Chinese students' metaphor comprehension compared with their Canadian counterparts.

3.3.4 The Procedures Of the Study

The research was conducted according to the following schedule: 1) The researcher conducted interviews with the participants to elicit background information. 2) The researcher asked the participants to read the metaphor and state the meaning. Subjects were then asked why they interpreted the metaphors as they did. 3) The researcher conducted interviews with the participants to elicit information on the factors they felt influenced their metaphor comprehension, their perspectives on how to improve their abilities on metaphor comprehension, and how to teach English language to the Chinese students in China that would help them understand the meaning of a metaphor. All the interviews for this study were taped and carefully transcribed by the researcher. All interview questions were conducted both in English and Chinese languages. The participants could answer in either of the two languages and responses in the Chinese language were translated into English. Responses in English were not corrected by the researcher. After the transcription, the researcher took the data to the participants. The two Chinese students made some corrections on the grammar and also some other minor changes.

The interview questions for the participants' background information are listed in **APPENDIX B**. These were the basic questions that the researcher had planned to ask to all three participants. Some questions were inappropriate for the Canadian student and several minor changes had to be made when the researcher interviewed the Canadian graduate student. The researcher formulated questions to determine the background information in order to develop thick description and draw information and implications from them to better help students in China understand simple metaphors in the English language.

The simple metaphor comprehension task were conducted by the researcher in the following manner: 1) The researcher asked the participants to read each sentence and interpret it. After the participant's interpretation, the researcher posed some probing questions, such as "Why did you interpret it this way?", "Tell me more about it.", "Tell me the common matching attributes between the topic and the vehicle in this metaphorical statement", "Which are the most salient attributes in the vehicle?", "Why do you think this is the most salient attribute?", etc. By asking such probing questions, the researcher expected to find out the perceived matching attributes between the topic and the vehicle by the participant. According to Ortony's theory (1979), the salient attribute that the reader perceived in the vehicle determines his or her interpretation of the metaphorical statement. Based on this notion, the logical conclusion was that the factors which determine the reader's estimation of the salient attribute in the vehicle would contribute or influence his or her comprehension of simple metaphors. The data that the researcher collected from this simple metaphor comprehension task and the interview were used as supplementary data to the essential question of this study.

The third part of this study included interviews aimed to elicit information on the factors that the three participants felt, or perceived, to be influencing their own metaphor comprehension, the factors that might influence Chinese students' metaphor comprehension, and their perspectives on how to improve Chinese students' abilities on metaphor comprehension and on how to teach English language to Chinese students in China more effectively. The essential question of this interview was "What are the factors influencing the comprehension of simple metaphors in English language?". Within the framework of the essential question, several open-ended questions, structured questions and probing questions were formed on the basis of the research questions of this study, the researcher's personal language education history and beliefs on language teaching and learning. The interview questions for part of the study are listed in **APPENDIX C.**

The researcher conducted the interviews and executed the metaphor comprehension task with the participants in a one-to-one manner in the expectation that the separate interview would supply better and more complete information for the study.

3.3.5 The Data Analysis

Powney and Watts suggest that data analysis is not a simple description of the data collected. It is, as they believe, a process by which the researcher can bring some interpretations to the data (Powney and Watts, 1987). Bogdan and Biklen indicate that the qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively. They suggest,

> As a qualitative researcher planning to develop some kind of theory about what you have been studying, the direction you will travel comes after you have been collecting the data, after you have spent time with your subjects. You are not putting together a puzzle, whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture which takes shape as you collect and examine the parts.
> (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 32)

To Guba and Lincoln, data are the constructions offered by participants. They refer to the qualitative data analysis as a synthetic process in which the constructions emerge from inquirer-source interactions and are reconstructed by the inquirer into meaningful entities (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). Thus in this study, data analysis was regarded as an act of constructive interpretation, by which the researcher attempted to construct propositions or theory from the actual data on hand.

3.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

One perennial question that faces researchers using any research paradigm is the question of the trustworthiness of the research findings. Can the results of the research be trusted? How can you know that the findings are true?

Guba and Lincoln (1985) summarize the four main concerns of any piece of research on the problem of trustworthiness. They are:

> 1. True value. How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?
> 2. Applicability. How can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)?
> 3. Consistency. How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects (respondents) in the same (or similar) context?
> 4. Neutrality. How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, and so on, of the inquirer?
>
> (Guba, 1981, p. 79-80)

In the rationalistic (quantitative) paradigm, as Guba (1981) points out, researchers use terms such as internal validity, external validity (or generalizability), reliability and objectivity to address the above four areas of interest respectively. Guba demonstrated the inappropriateness of the trustworthiness measurement in the rationalistic paradigm and asserted that to apply conventional rationalistic paradigm trustworthiness measures to the naturalistic (qualitative) research paradigm is inappropriate. Instead of applying the rationalistic research paradigm criteria to research in the naturalistic research paradigm, Guba proposed alternative trustworthiness criteria to consider for the four areas of interest in the naturalistic research paradigm. The criteria that he proposed include, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.4.1 Credibility

Credibility is used to compare with the internal validity in the rationalistic paradigm to establish the true value. This criterion measures the truthfulness or accuracy of the findings. Some researchers (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982) point out that credibility may be the major strength and prime objective of naturalistic (or qualitative) research. The term "Credibility" implies that the researcher's task is to show that the data is believable because the thoroughness and total integrity of the description enable the reader to get a complete understanding of the study. For the purpose of establishing true value, the researcher in the naturalistic research paradigm is interested in testing the credibility of his or her research results with various sources from which data were drawn. Guba indicates that the process of testing credibility is often referred as doing "member checks". That is to test the data with members of relevant human data source groups (Guba, 1981). In Lincoln and Guba's 1985 writing, they further suggest the following methods can be employed to increase the credibility of the findings and interpretations of the research findings: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checking.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation are all activities which can increase the probability that credible findings will be produced. In this case study, triangulation, which is a process whereby various data sources, different investigators, different theories, and different methods are arranged against one another in order to cross-check the data and the interpretation as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Guba (1981) and Merriam (1988), was not possible to apply. Instead, the researcher put more emphasis on prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Prolonged engagement, according to Lincoln and Guba,

> is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning "the culture", testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust.
> (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 301)

In this study, the researcher spent considerable time conversing with the three participants, learnt their backgrounds, studied the context they had been in and were in, tried to be objective and developed a trust relationship between the researcher and the subjects. The researcher kept a record after each interview, to check his own developing perceptions. Like prolonged engagement, persistent observation also requires the researcher to spend enough time in the research. Lincoln and Guba state,

> If the purpose of prolonged engagement is to render the inquirer open to the multiple influences--the mutual shapers and contextual factors--that impinge upon the phenomenon being studied, the purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail. If prolonged engagement provide scope, persistent observation provides depth.
> (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 302)

In order to find out the factors influencing the three participants' comprehension of simple metaphors in the English language, the researcher extended his interactions with the participants, by conducting more interviews, eliminating questions that were irrelevant, attending to relevant aspects essential to the problem.

> Peer debriefing, according to Lincoln and Guba, is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind.
> (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 308)

During the data collection process, the data summarization process, and the interpreting process, the researcher invited two faculty members to comment on the process and the findings of this research.

3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability is used to compare with the external validity in the rationalistic paradigm to address the question of "Could these findings be applied to other situations?". Guba points out the fact that the external validity (or generalizability) of the rationalistic research paradigm is taken as time-enduring and can be held in any context. He criticizes this point of view and promotes the notion that it is impossible to develop "truth" statements that will have generalizable applicability. He suggests that inquiry can be affected by the uniqueness of the context and the participants. Therefore, according to him, there is no inquiry from which we can produce truth statements of generalizable applicability. Researchers, as Guba believes, should be happy with the descriptive or interpretive statements of a given context under study. Guba also acknowledges the possibility that some transferability between two contexts could happen if there were certain fundamental similarities. The transferability of the research findings in the naturalistic research paradigm relies heavily upon the extent of similarity between the contexts (Guba, 1981). In order to achieve this transferability of research findings (in other words, the possibility of generalization), Guba suggests to collect thick descriptive data and do theoretical or purposive sampling while doing the study and develop thick descriptions after completing the study in order to allow the comparison to other contexts (Guba, 1981). In the present study, theoretical or purposive sampling is not possible, instead the researcher made an effort to generate detailed and rich descriptions of the three participants and tried to provide the desired "thick" descriptive data so that the reader might make his or her own determination of the degree of fit with other contexts.

3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability can be compared to reliability in the rationalistic research paradigm to deal with the consistency problem (How dependable are the results?). In the rationalistic research paradigm, the researchers believe that inquiry can be affected by instrumental decay or change. In order to guard against this happening, researchers using this paradigm must replicate. But, a naturalistic study cannot be exactly replicated.

Researchers using the naturalistic paradigm believe that social contexts are unique and are always changing. Instability of the findings will occur due to the fact that the social world consists only as a set of multiple realities. There is a great possibility that the research instrument will change because in the naturalistic research paradigm the research instrument is the human being--the researcher, the knowledge and the insight of the researcher will increase during the process of conducting the research. Another factor that will influence this is that the phenomena being investigated are also not static, but are changing constantly. The researchers of the naturalistic research paradigm are concerned with more than just a simple replication. The researchers must accept that some portion of observed instability is real and unavoidable. In order to gain more dependability of the research findings, Guba suggests the use of overlap methods, stepwise replication, and an audit trail while doing the study and then doing a dependability audit after completing the study (Guba, 1981).

In this study, using the technique of overlap methods and stepwise replication were not possible. The researcher employed the audit trail method and arranged a dependability audit. The function of an audit trail as described by Guba is that it makes

> it possible for an external auditor to examine the processes whereby data were collected and analyzed, and interpretations were made. The audit trail takes the form of documentation (the actual interview notes taken, for example) and a running account of the process (as in the form of the investigator's daily journal).
> (Guba, 1981, p. 87)

In order to let an audit happen, the researcher described in great detail how these data were collected, how the meaning was derived, and how the decisions were made throughout the research. After the completion of this study, the researcher invited a faculty member to conduct a dependability audit to examine the information and comment on the process.

3.4.4 Confirmability

The term "confirmability" compares with objectivity in a rationalistic research paradigm to deal with the neutrality problem. In a rationalistic research paradigm, researchers believe that the inquiry can be affected by the inquirer's predictions and bias. In order to guard against this happening, the researcher must be insulated. The researchers in the naturalistic research paradigm are more aware of the cultural and ethnic biases that the researcher might bring into the research because their belief is that there are multiple realities in the social world. Because of this belief, they move their focus from the qualifications of the investigator and his or her method to the confirmability of the data collected. To provide for confirmability, Guba suggests triangulation and the practice of reflexivity (leaving an audit trail) while doing the study and completing a confirmability audit after the study is finished (Guba, 1981). In this study, triangulation was not possible, but the researcher practiced reflexivity and arranged for a confirmability audit. The term practicing reflexivity, according to Ruby, means to

> intentionally reveal to his audience the underlying epistemological assumptions which cause him to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, and finally to present his findings in a particular way.
> (Ruby, 1980, p. 157)

In this study, the researcher has briefly shared his history with the readers, and kept a kind of record to track the developing insights of the researcher. After the research, the researcher completed a confirmability audit. The term confirmability audit, according to Guba, is

> to certify that data exist in support of every interpretation and that the interpretations have been made in ways consistent with the available data... This type of audit is concerned primarily with the products of the inquiry...
> (Guba, 1981, p. 81)

The researcher asked the same faculty member who had conducted the dependability audit to conduct the confirmability audit.

CHAPTER FOUR: EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN CHINA DURING THE TWO CHINESE PARTICIPANTS' EARLY ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

As Ashworth notes,

> Educational policies are affected by economic and social policies, as these regulate the amount of money and resources that will be available to institutions as well as establishing the atmosphere that surrounds and permeates them.
> (Ashworth, 1985, p. 94)

What Ashworth described is exactly the case with education in the People's Republic of China. This Chapter will briefly review the educational policies, English language teaching and other educational practices during the Great Cultural Revolution (between 1966-1976) and the post Great Cultural Revolution era (1976-1989). By doing this, the researcher is aiming to provide thick description in order that readers can better understand the English language learning of the two Chinese participants, John and David respectively.

4.1 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN CHINA DURING JOHN'S PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS

From 1966 to 1976, while John was in the primary and middle schools, China was experiencing a decade of disasters which was called by Chairman Mao Zedong "the Great Cultural Revolution". This Great Cultural Revolution seriously damaged the whole educational system, and imposed great losses on the academic excellence in China (Wu, 1993). The direct consequence of this big political event was a series of great changes in the educational policies of all levels of educational institutions in China. The elite education policy was abandoned. Examinations in all academic fields were cancelled. The requirement for college entrance was not excellent performance on the required subjects, and learning was no longer regarded as the priority in the school system. Red, political soundness, was emphasized through one's whole schooling life. In Wu's autobiographical account, this big reform in the Chinese education system in 1966 and its impacts can be seen very clearly. Wu delineates,

> I was very tired at the time I went to bed today. We were supposed to have high-school entrance examinations tomorrow. These examinations are so important to me, that if my scores are not high enough for the key high schools, I will definitely lose my chance to get into a university later. That means I would not have an intellectual future for my whole life.
>
> It was eleven o'clock. Lying in bed, I was still thinking about those math formulas. I heard the radio in my parents room. After the solemn music of "The East is Red", the announcer's voice knocked on my ears: ".... Examinations in our schools cannot evaluate the true knowledge of the students. They cannot examine students' ability in problem analyzing and solving. They lead our young people to be book worms divorced from proletarian politics, from the worker and peasant masses and from practice. They also become the instrument of bourgeois intellectuals to dominate our school and to suppress students' initiatives and creativeness. Our great teacher, great leader, great commander, and great helmsman Chairman Mao instructed that all the examinations in education be banned. This is effective immediately..."
>
> I found myself immediately jumping from the bed shouting "Long live Chairman Mao! Long live Chairman Mao!". With tears in my eye, I heard the radio continued: "No one else in the world could have such great insight and make such courageous decisions. He stands high and sees far, designing the future of our country for hundreds and thousands of years to come."
>
> (Wu, 1993, p. 51-52)

The political unrest and educational changes, Xie (1992) points out, had greatly interrupted the English language teaching in China. Wu described his view on English language learning at that time. He wrote in his autobiographical account,

> What is the use of learning English? All the English speaking countries are our enemies. We will never get a chance to speak to any of them unless we meet in a battlefield.
>
> (Wu, 1993, p. 53)

Xie described the general English language teaching situation in China during that period of time. She wrote,

> English teachers were not only criticized as bourgeois intellectuals, but also accused of being worshippers of foreign capitalist, running dogs of imperialism or even American spies. English textbooks were criticized as "poisonous weeds".
> (Xie, 1992, p. 19)

In the early seventies of this century, with the consolidation of China's legitimate position in the United Nations and the mild improvement of the Sino-American relationship, English language teaching and learning was again put into the agenda. But at that time, English language teaching was mainly restricted in the universities to the politically sound worker-peasant-soldier students. The Chinese Communist Party recognized the power of language and emphasized that, "foreign languages should be useful tools for tasks such as publicizing Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought, and supporting the worldwide struggles against imperialists, revisionists, and reactionaries" (Xie, 1992, p. 19). Thus the English textbooks published at that time in China were full of political content and revolutionary slogans. For instance, one textbook entitled English published by the Beijing Foreign Language Institute, is full of slogans such as "Long live Chairman Mao!", "Study hard and make progress everyday" (Chairman Mao Zedong's quotation), "People of the World Unite to Overthrow the Imperialism", etc., and English texts in it are mostly translations of Chairman Mao Zedong's articles, political speeches and statements, excerpts from the People's Daily (The official newspaper of the Communist Party in China) and The Red Flag (The official journal of the Communist Party in China). The texts served as illustrations of the actual use of grammatical structures. In the English classes, students were taught to sing, "The East is Red", "I love Beijing Tiananmen Square" and "Internationale" in the English language. Original excerpts from the newspapers and magazines published in North America and Britain, and original short stories and poems from the British and American literature were not allowed to be used as reading materials inside or outside of the classrooms. The following are two typical texts in English language textbooks published in China at that time:

This text is from an English textbook published in Shanghai and deals with the simple past tense.

Learn From Chin Hsun-hua

> Comrade Chin Hsun-hua was a Red Guard. He was from a worker's family. In May 1969, he answered Chairman Mao's call and went to settle down in Heilungkiang. Comrade Chin Hsun-hua studied Chairman Mao's works conscientiously. He earnestly received re-education from the poor and lower-middle peasants. He tempered himself in the three great revolutionary movements. In his diary, he wrote, "I will work with all my energy as long as I live, and dedicate my whole life to Chairman Mao!" He did what he said.
>
> On August 15, 1969, Comrade Chin Hsun-hua heroically laid down his life for the people. Though Comrade Chin Hsun-hua is dead, he lives forever in our hearts.
>
> (From Price, 1979b, p. 322)

The second is from a textbook published in Beijing using the same content to deal with the past continuous and past future tenses.

Learn From Chin Hsun-hua

> It was August 15, 1969. The Hsunho River rose rapidly after a heavy rain. Soon there was a big flood. The telegraph poles on the river bank near the Shuanho Brigade would drift away at any time.
>
> "We must save the poles," said Chin Hsun-hua. "Let us go!" Together with his comrades, Chin rushed to the riverside. The water was running swiftly and two of the poles were already drifting away. At once Chin jumped into the river.
>
> "Come back!", someone called out. "The current is too swift. It's dangerous!" But Chin shouted back, "WHEN WE DIE FOR THE PEOPLE IT IS A WORTHY DEATH." (A quotation from Chairman Mao)
>
> Chin Hsun-hua struggled bravely against the strong waves. One wave after another rushed upon him. Yet he did not turn back. To him, the poles were not just poles. They would carry wires, and over the wires would come Chairman Mao's voice. Now the current was carrying him farther and farther away. He was losing strength, but he struggled on. Three times he pushed his head up and made for the pole near him. It was only one metre away when another big wave rushed over him. Chin Hsun-hua thus heroically gave his life for the people.
>
> Chin Hsun-hua was born in a worker's family. He finished middle school in Shanghai in 1968. In May 1969, he answered Chairman Mao's call and went to settle down in Heilungkiang. There he studied hard Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, and earnestly received re-education from the poor and lower-middle peasants. He tempered himself in the storms of class struggle. In his diary he wrote, "I will work with all my strength as long as I live, and give my whole life to Chairman Mao!" He

> did what he said. Chin Hsun-hua is dead, but he will live forever in our hearts. His revolutionary spirit will always inspire us. (From Price, 1979b, p. 322)

English language teaching at that time, as Fu points out, "only emphasizes grammar and translation at the expense of language practice" (Fu, 1983, p. 1). The common methodology that most teachers employed to teach English at that time, was the Grammar-translation and the Audiolingual approaches. Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker (1979) had commented on the English language teaching practice of that time in China. They state,

> One element which was consistently missing was any opportunity for students to practice communicative use of English. Students were rarely given the opportunity to use language to state their own opinions, express their own feelings, or communicate new information to their classmates. There was a heavy reliance on rote memorization and the reproduction of carefully prepared lessons.
> (Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker, 1979, p. 474)

4.2 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN CHINA DURING JOHN'S UNIVERSITY AND TEACHING YEARS, AND DAVID'S MIDDLE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY YEARS

After the death of Chairman Mao Zedong and the downfall of Mao's wife Jiang Qing and three other government leaders (Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen) who were designated as "the Gang of Four", China entered a new and more promising era. The "four modernizations" (namely the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology) were emphasized and clearly stated by the Chinese government as the national development goals. In 1977, Deng Xiaoping, the senior Chinese leader, stressed in his discourse on the subject of respect knowledge and respect trained personnel that, "The key to achieving modernization is the development of science and technology. And unless we pay attention to education, it will be impossible to develop science and technology... We must recognize our backwardness, because only such recognition offers hope. Now it appears that China is fully 29 years behind the developed countries in science, technology and education" (Deng, 1984, p. 53). Shortly after these national goals and Deng's speech were publicized, there were urgent calls from the mass media for the selection and "nourishment of talent" in order to rapidly modernize socialist China (Price, 1979a, p. 287-309). In 1977, a new educational policy was issued, it clearly states that university entrance in China would be based primarily on examination results in the future. As Peking Review put it: "entrance examinations will be restored and admittance based on their results" (Higher education: new college enrollment system, p. 17). The university entrance examination is a national unified examination. It is held in two parts: humanities and science. Humanities' candidates are examined in politics, Chinese language and literature, mathematics, history, geography, and foreign language. Science candidates are examined in politics, Chinese language and literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry and foreign language. The details of the examination process, outlines of the required knowledge, selection criteria and the methods of application were given considerable prominence in the national press. This provided the young people a chance for fair competition for a better future (Price, 1979a, p. 287-309). In 1978, Deng Xiaoping addressed the following in a national conference on science and technology:

> ... Backwardness must be recognized before it can be changed. One must learn from those who are most advanced before one can catch up with and surpass them. Of course, in order to raise China's scientific and technological level we must rely on our own efforts, develop our own creativity and persist in the policy of independence and self-reliance. But independence does not mean shutting the door on the world, nor does self-reliance mean blind opposition to everything foreign. Science and technology are part of the wealth created in common by all mankind. Every people or country should learn from the advanced science and technology of others. It is not just today, when we are scientifically and technologically backward, that we need to learn from others. Even after we catch up with the most advanced countries, we shall still have to learn from them in areas where they are particularly strong.
> (Deng, 1984, p. 106-107)

In order to catch up with the development of other western countries and to learn science and technology from the outside world, the Chinese government adopted a new foreign policy--the open door policy. This new policy encourages more and more close contacts with other developed countries in the world to promote their scientific, cultural and educational exchange with China. In 1978, the Chinese government set up a series of policies to send Chinese students to study abroad and to also accept foreign students and scholars to study and to teach in China (Huang, 1987). As Huang pointed out,

> It was Comrade Deng Xiaoping's initiative to implement on a large scale the policy of sending many students and visiting scholars abroad from 1978 onwards as part of the open-door policy and the drive for four modernizations.
> (Huang, 1987, p. 228)

With the improvement of the relationship with other countries, the Chinese government had sent thousands and thousands of students to other countries and accepted many students and scholars from the other countries. Statistics show, in 1978 alone, that the Chinese government accepted 1207 international students and sent 3348 Chinese students and scholars to other countries (Huang, 1987).

In October of 1983, Deng Xiaoping said that education should be oriented to modernization, to the world and to the future. The "Three Orientations", according to Huang, implies that,

> (1) a recognition of the importance of the furtherance of lively international exchanges in the field of education, science and culture; (2) the view that educational institutions should nurture globally-minded citizens and help promote international understanding; (3) a call for Chinese scholars and students to learn from foreign countries what is advanced, valuable and relevant for China's modernization efforts; and (4) a commitment for China to make a distinctive contribution to the family of nations in the advancement of education, science and culture and in furthering the cause of peace.
> (Huang, 1987, p. 228)

According to Huang (1987), the new foreign policy of the Chinese government attaches great importance to the contacts among people from different nations to promote mutual understanding and friendships. The Chinese government encourages different organizations and people to have contacts with those in foreign nations and expects fruitful and ever-expanding international exchanges between China and other foreign countries in the years to come.

Along with the open-door policy, economic reform, and educational reforms, learning English language fever swept the whole country. Cheng (1988) estimated that in

1988 fifty million people in China were engaged in English language learning. In the Chinese universities, colleges and middle schools today, English language is a compulsory course. From 1977 onward, the central national education committee of China developed a new unified English language textbook for the middle school students in China Besides, the grammatical structures and pattern drills, some texts with North American content were added to the textbooks. Stories such as "The Match Girl", "The Emperor's New Clothes" and some politically neutral short poems and prose were added to the textbooks as well. At the end of the middle school, the students are required to take an English language test before they enter the universities and colleges, as English is a required, tested subject in the national unified college entrance examination. At the universities or college, no matter what the students' majors are, English is very important to them. If they fail an English language course, they are required to take it again. If they fail for the second time, they may lose their degrees unless they pass a subsequent similar test on the English language. After students graduate from a university or college, English language is required for their future further promotion in various academic institutions and in many other working units. English language has become a major priority in the Chinese education system. Just as Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker had observed, "Foreign language teaching, and English language teaching in particular, occupies a prominent role in Chinese education" (Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker, 1979, p. 476).

With the popularity of radios and televisions in China, informal English language learning opportunities for the Chinese people increased greatly. English language teaching programs on radio were very popular and were broadcast in almost every province all across mainland China. In Heilongjiang province alone, two different levels of English language teaching programs were broadcast at the same time between 1978 and 1984. English language teaching programs such as BBC's "Follow Me", "Bid For Power", "Sadrana Project", "English on Sunday" etc., are on the national television and provincial television programs very regularly.

According to Xie (1992), since 1979, the national conference on English language teaching methodology has been held every year. There is a lively debate on the application of communicative approach in English language teaching among the Chinese teachers in China (Burnaby, and Sun, 1989). Research journals on English language teaching and learning were established to circulate novel ideas on methodology among English language teachers in universities and in middle schools. English language newspapers and magazines published in China began to appear. Newspapers such as China Daily, and magazines such as Beijing Review, English Language Learning and The World of English are very popular. New English textbooks for Chinese learners are published both within and outside China. A large number of original English language novels and other useful books from the U. S., Britain and Canada have been imported to China. Many universities have hired native English speakers to work in the universities, and sent qualified Chinese English language teachers to go abroad for further study on EFL methodology.

In summary, as long as the present policies on economic and political reforms, and the open door policies to the rest of the world continue, English language teaching and learning will, beyond any doubt, maintain an important role in the Chinese education system. Moffett even predicts that "the People's Republic of China should become recognized as one of the leaders in foreign language teaching methodology before the turn of the century" (Moffett, 1983, p. 150).

CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRESENTATION OF THE THREE CASES

In this chapter, the researcher will present a description of the three cases studied. Each case will consist of data on the participant's parents, education of the participant, information on how the participant had been taught and how he or she learned English and the life and study of the participant in this Canadian university. Detailed information of the participants, namely John, David and Jim's performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task data, can be found in APPENDIX D, APPENDIX E, and APPENDIX F respectively. These data presentations include information on how the participants interpreted the metaphorical statements, and why.

5.1 JOHN: DATA DESCRIPTION

John was born in 1958 in a small county named Hulian in Heilongjiang Province, the People's Republic of China. Hulian is a small agricultural county. John is the eldest of six children. His parents received only a middle school education when they were young. Working as ordinary railway workers, they were unable to earn much money. But as responsible parents, they were very supportive of their children's education.

> They are very good parents. They worked very hard to earn money to buy us the textbooks, pencils, paper and school bags. You know, there were six children in the family, every year when the new term started, they would spend lots and lots of money to buy us the books, school bags and clothes. They encouraged us to learn more, and read more... I was in a teacher's university in Changchun, Jilin, every month the university gave me some money for food and clothes, but still my father would send me some extra money every month. You know, they earned very little, and there were other children in the family. They were just very nice parents. No matter what happens, they would always be there ready to help us.

(John: 1993/06/01)

John started his primary school education in 1967. In the primary school, he was taught to read in Chinese, do simple mathematical calculations, use an abacus, sing revolutionary songs, draw, and he gained some agriculture knowledge. He did not learn a foreign language at that time. Like other Chinese boys and girls, he was asked to recite Chairman Mao Zedong's revolutionary poems and quotations, learn to love his motherland, the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese people and physical labor.

In 1972, John entered a middle school in his home town. As in primary school, John was considered to be a three-good student (Good in physical education, good in moral education and good in academic work) in the class. He often represented his class by making speeches in the school meetings. He further learned the Chinese language, mathematics, chemistry, physics, some agricultural knowledge and practice and how to apply knowledge learned from the chemistry and physics classes to agricultural work. Also at the middle school, he started to learn the English language. But in the middle school where John studied, English language was not considered to be an important subject, the qualifications of the teacher were very poor, the methods of teaching and learning were very old, and there were no adequate resources in that school on English language teaching and learning. The textbook that John used when he was in the middle school was mainly politically oriented and full of political slogans and propaganda. It did not contain any knowledge on the culture of English-speaking people. John recalled,

> In fact, I remember, I started to learn the English language in the middle school. At that time, other middle schools in our county were all studying Russian language. But in our school, English was taught. Later, I learned it was because that we didn't have a Russian teacher at the school. The school had a teacher who knew a little bit of Japanese and a teacher who knew a little of English. But the Party secretary of the school chose English, because the teacher who knew Japanese had a relative in Japan, the Party secretary was afraid that this teacher might poison "the future of new China", and so the decision was made to teach English in that school. I remember, at that time, during the whole middle school education, we only had one very thin English textbook. Besides, by the time that we finished the middle school, we had not finished the whole book. I think after I finished middle school, I could only remember that I had learned the

> English phrases "We study for the revolution", "Long live Chairman Mao!".
> (John: 1993/06/01)

After John finished his middle school in 1975, he was sent to the countryside of this small county to receive a re-education from the poor and lower-middle class peasants. In 1977, the Chinese government revised its national educational policies. Students were asked to take an examination in order to gain admission to the colleges and universities. As 1977 was the first year that the government had this new policy, tests for that year's college entrance examination were less complicated compared with the later ones. In the 1977 examination, the result of the English language test was not counted in the final total score. After working in the countryside for almost two years, John took the national unified college entrance examination. Fortunately, he was admitted to a teacher's university in Changchun, Jilin Province specializing in Biology even though his English was not very good.

The university that John studied in, is a key educational institution to train college teachers in China. It has very high requirements and standards for its graduates. Though John's major was Biology, still English language is a required course for the BS degree. At the university, John had to take English language very seriously and he studied it from the very basics, but instruction was mainly in Grammar-translation. Compared with the years when he studied in the middle school, he had better teachers, better English language resources and a better environment to learn the language at the university.

When John recalled his English language learning at the university, he said,

> In the first year, I remember, usually, the English lesson went on like this. First, the teacher explained the new words, and helped us to pronounce them correctly. Then we would use the new words or expressions to make new sentences. Secondly, we learned the drills, the teacher asked us to use the new words and expressions and the new drills to make new sentences. Third, the teacher explained the texts, and translated them into Chinese. Finally, we would do the exercises.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

The university had regulations on English language learning and teaching. The time allotted to English language instruction was fixed and the examination was very strict.

> I cannot remember exactly the amount of time. But I think, in the first year and the second year, we had English class for nearly 4 hours every week. We had examinations on English too. The examination was very strict. We had to memorize everything in order to pass the examinations.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

During the last two years at the university, as John had finished his English language courses, he spent most of his time on other subjects rather than on English language learning. John believes that his previous work on English language learning, especially during the university education period, provided him with a foundation for his future English language development.

After John got his BS in 1982, he was assigned to work as an instructor in an agriculture university in Harbin. Working as a new instructor in the university, he did not spend much time on English language learning. But in 1986, a big event happened to him, he was chosen by the government as a candidate to go abroad for further study. Before he left China, he attended an intensive English language training program in Beijing. It was a two-months full time special language training program focused on improving the learners' speaking, listening, writing and cultural and geographical knowledge of North America. While recalling this program, John said,

> At that time, we had a foreigner to teach our spoken English, he talked in English, and we listened. And then he gave us some topics and asked us to speak in English, it was very hard for me at that time to speak, I tried to speak. He introduced Christmas, Thanksgiving and some other knowledge about America. We had games in English, we had performed plays in English. We also had two Chinese teachers to help us to prepare the TOEFL, we had grammar lessons, listening lessons, reading exercises, it was very tense two months, but I learned a lot.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

John arrived in Edmonton, Canada in 1987. He was on an exchange program with the University of Alberta. At the beginning, he was a visiting scholar to the Department of Animal Science. Seven months after he arrived here, he took the TOEFL. With a TOEFL score of 578, he was admitted as a master's graduate student to the Department of Animal Science. In 1991, due to his super academic performance, John became a Ph.D. student in the same department. John believes that his stay in Canada, especially studying and working with the English speaking Canadian professors and students, helped him to get a satisfactory TOEFL score in 1987.

According to John, his experience in Canada has been a very pleasant one. When John arrived in Edmonton in 1987, the economy in Canada was relatively much better off than it is now. According to him, there were very few Chinese students studying or working in Canada at that time. He said the Chinese students were not closely associated. During the first two years in the university, he lived in HUB sharing an apartment with three Canadian students. As a visiting scholar, he was welcomed by the Department. During the time of his initial stay in Canada, he believed that the people he met, especially the Canadians were very friendly and helpful. John said,

> I think, the Canadian people were friendly, they talked to you, wish to know things about China, the tradition, the culture, the universities, the work that we have done in China, and they cared about you. At that time the economy in Canada was good. I had chances to go to parties, concerts, to potluck parties, even when the professors had parties or meetings they would invite me to attend. And the Chairman at that time had invited me to his home to have dinner and to spend Christmas, and some other holidays. I still think that I have met some very nice people.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

After John became a master's student, he studied very hard in the Department. But because of language and cultural differences, he met some problems in his study at the beginning. He had problems understanding the lectures in the class and found it hard to finish the required readings or writings in the required time. He said,

> The textbooks that we had used were all in the English language. At first, I could not read very fast, I have to use the dictionary, to find the new words and new terms. In fact, I really had no time to read other English newspapers or magazine at that time. To write in English, to do presentations in English, were very tough. Taking the undergraduate courses was very hard, you have to take the examinations, but I couldn't write as fast as the Canadian students, when I wrote I had to consider the grammar, and think of English words that I knew, and words that I was sure that I could spell them correctly. Typing paper was another problem, I didn't know how to type at that time, I didn't know how to use computers, I had to learn them, and learn to type fast and correctly. At the beginning, I used the tape recorder to record what the professors said in the class, because I could not write down what the professor said in the class. While in the class at that time, I just struggled to understand the lecture, I didn't pay any attention to what kind of language or what kind of figurative language devices that they had used.

(John: 1993/06/01)

Due to the difficulties in study, for a period of time, he began to feel lonely and homesick.

In 1989, a great change happened in John's life. Because of the political upheavals in China, the Canadian government offered him a chance to stay in Canada permanently. He happily accepted this offer. After he became a permanent resident in 1990, his wife and his son arrived in Edmonton. John's wife could speak English quite well. After they arrived in Canada, John's wife immediately found a job as a house keeper and their son was sent to a daycare center near Michener Park where they lived. John was very surprised with his son's English language development. His wife and his child are doing well and have adopted the Canadian way of life. They actively involved themselves in the Canadian people's social activities, and they are planning to spend the rest of their life in Canada.

John's wife is now working in a travel agency run by a Canadian citizen. Like most Edmontonians, every morning John and his wife read Canadian newspapers, every evening they watch Canadian television programs and during weekends and holidays they do a little traveling.

> We usually watch CBC's news, and some American programs. We also watch some other humorous programs, and some comedies. Since last year, we began to have Edmonton Journal everyday, I usually go through the title every morning, and do not read it very seriously, like word by word, I am reading only for the meaning in it, to seek information, I don't have enough time to read it carefully, because I have to work in the lab.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

Besides their Chinese friends, they now have a large circle of friends with very different ethnic and racial backgrounds.

> My wife is now working in a travel agent office, she has lots of contacts with the Canadians. I mostly only have contact with the graduate students and the professors... I have friends from Africa. Their English language pronunciation is not so good, but their listening and writing are excellent, some of them are very nice people... Every year when Christmas comes, the Department will have the international students invited to a party, every year my family will attend such parties, but we did not involve in the politics and religious activities.

(John: 1993/06/01)

On the whole, John and his family are satisfied with their life here, they believe that Life is convenient in Canada and there are many different economic and academic opportunities for them. They are confident that their situation in Canada will become better and better.

5.2 DAVID: DATA DESCRIPTION

David was born in a middle school teacher's family in Harbin City in 1963. His parents were both mathematics teachers in the local schools. There are three children in David's family. David's parents received teacher's university education and both are well-known middle school teachers and hold important teaching positions in their own schools. Their works and achievements in teaching were recoganized by the local government and both were awarded the title of model teacher. After David came into this world, he began to live a well-to-do life.

David's parents were very supportive of their children's academic work. They tried hard to coach their children in their spare time to prepare them for a better future. David said,

> At the time when I was in school, English is a required course for the middle school, if you want to graduate from the school and if you wish to enter a university, you must learn English.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

David's grandfather on his father's side received his Japanese education in Changchun, the former Manchurian capital city, during the period when the Japanese aggressors occupied Northeast China. He also had a lot of influence on David and his two sisters' academic career development. David's two sisters both passed the college entrance examination and entered universities.

> My grandfather knows a little English. In fact, his Japanese is quite good. I don't know where he learned English. He knew a little bit of English. I

> remember when I just entered the middle school, he gave me an English language textbook called English 900. He had some influences on my language learning, but not very much.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

David started his primary school education in 1971 in Harbin, the capital city of Heilongjiang Province. It is one of the most renowned elementary schools in the province. The school has some very good teachers and some teaching and learning facilities that other schools in the city cannot afford. Besides, the school is very close to the children's palace in Harbin; the children can have a variety of enjoyable learning activities over there. In his primary school years, David learned the Chinese language, arithmetic, music, geography, and other courses.

> I think when I was in the last year of my primary school, the government changed its policy on the college enrollment. I think, at that time, my father might think that as he and my mother were all middle school teachers, they didn't have power in the society and we didn't have any relatives who hold important positions in the government, and if we three children were unable to enter universities, they would not have any relationship to go backdoor to find a decent job for us when we were grown up and graduated from the middle school. I think, probably because of this, and this college entrance examination provided chances for ordinary family's children to go up, so my parents started to pay attention to our children's schooling at that time, and encouraged us to study hard to pass the examinations and enter a university.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

In 1976, David entered a key middle school in Harbin where he began to learn English. He had a good English language teacher to teach him. While David was in the middle school, the national education committee unified the English language textbook for middle school students. Though there is still political content, compared with the textbooks published during the Cultural Revolution period, the material is more practical and there is more background information about the target language.

At the start of his English language learning, David's English was not very good, but after a period of hard work, the coaching of his parents and the special favor of the English teacher, he became the top student in English of the class.

> I think it was at the end of the third year, there was an English language competition both on English grammar, reading comprehension, and reading out aloud in the whole Harbin city, I won the second place in my grade

> group, my name was hanged on the wall of the Youth Palace, and I won a very good English and Chinese dictionary.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

In 1981, after David graduated from the middle school, he entered a medical university in Harbin city majoring in medical sciences. In the first two years, though the quality of English teaching was not very good, he still studied hard on English. His score on the English language test was the top among his fellow classmates. He was not happy with the teaching method that the instructor employed in the English language class. He said,

> The teachers who had taught us still using the old way to teach us. You know, this was a very big classroom, and many students in it, one teacher lectured in the front, he rarely spoke in English, most of the time, he will speak in Chinese, you know, many students in one classroom, still the teacher asked one student stand up to read and translate, it was just a waste of time. And often, the teacher gave us a little piece of reading in English and asked the students to finish it in 20 minutes, after the twenty minutes, the teacher would check the answers, it was just a waste of time. I think I learned nothing from the English class. Besides, those English courses, we had a special medical English course, that was another terrible English language course, it was just an English vocabulary building course. As I realized the English language teaching situation there was like this, so I thought I should do something on my English by myself. Because I wanted to enter a graduate program in the university, so I had to study very hard, not only on other subjects but on English as well.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

In David's spare time, he paid very close attention to his English language learning. He attended presentations in English, he listened to English language teaching programs on the radio every day, he watched English teaching programs on television, and he actively participated in the activities intended to improve the students' English language abilities in and outside the university.

When David finished his English language courses at the university, he did not quit his learning of English language. He seriously prepared himself for the graduate student entrance examination on all subjects that were required. English language was one of the most important subjects. He read widely in English, listened to the regular news broadcasting programs from the English speaking countries, and practiced speaking in English wherever there was a chance.

After his five years' studies at the university, he successfully enrolled himself into a master's program. Due to the influence of his fellow graduate students, he decided to go abroad for further study after he obtained his master's degree. In order to reach this goal, he had to study hard to get a high score on the TOEFL. He studied even harder than before on English. During his graduate student years, he was considered to be able to speak very good English both by the professors and his fellow graduates.

In 1991, after he had successfully completed his master's program, David came to the University of Alberta as a graduate student. It was the time that the economy in Canada was gradually descending. North America was experiencing an economic recession. Many Canadians were out of work, lots and lots of Canadian people were leading a miserable existence, riots (or rebellions) and workers' demonstrations constantly appeared in the major North American cities. Some right-wing government officials in Canada even publicly blamed the new immigrants for bringing new burdens to the country. There was hostility and resentment among some of the Canadians towards the new immigrants and anything foreign, because they believed that the new immigrants were taking away their jobs. In spite of the above situation, David still had a very good impression of Canada during his first few months here. He said,

> Before I came to Canada, some of my Chinese friends had arranged everything for me. They had rented a room for me in the HUB. They met me at the airport. Everything was arranged perfectly. When I first came, I felt that everything was great. I got quite a large amount of money from my supervisor. Because I was supposed to do experiments for him. I shared an apartment with three other Chinese students. Some of my Chinese friends took me to the West Edmonton Mall and other places. At that time, I thought Canada was a perfect place to live in the world. In the superstore, you could find various kinds of food, the air was so clean, everywhere was covered with green grass, people were very polite, the buildings were so clean.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

But unfortunately, this good impression was not a long-lasting one. Shortly after the new term started, David immediately fell into the agony of adjusting himself to the new culture and new life style.

> But after the term started, the real things began to come. While I was in China, I thought my English was quite good, but while attending courses in this university, I found it was not true. I could not understand what the professors said in the class. I have to write papers or reports to the professors, and I found they were very tough jobs for me. These two years had been very tough time for me, I miss home and friends. I sick very often. For a very long period of time, I can't fall asleep in the night. I don't know what I am doing now. The three Chinese friends that I shared an apartment building are nice to me. We were all together. But still I don't know what I am doing.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

He lost confidence in himself. His attitudes towards the Canadian people and the Canadian culture changed. And he himself became very critical of this capitalist society. He states:

> I found the Canadian students always thinking that the Chinese were poor and do very low jobs. Now, as there are many Chinese students had immigrated to Canada, the Canadians thought that they had taken their jobs. Now, the economy in Canada is not good. The government blamed all the bad things to the new immigrants. In fact, I found many Canadian students were very stupid in the class, often asked silly questions. I also found that the Canadians were not direct people at all. In fact they were very insincere. For example, when they asked you "How are you?", they did not really mean it, they might not wait for you to answer and walked away. Things in Canada are very strange. Such as the old woman is trying ways to look like a young girl, and young man keeps very long beards and trying to look like an old man. Unmarried young people lived together, young girls have babies, divorces are as ordinary as changing a shirt.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

Presently, David is working very hard on his research project. He has a very close connection with some medical universities in China. He believes there is no future for him in Canada and he is planning to go back to China to work after finishing his research project.

5.3 JIM: DATA DESCRIPTION

Jim is a graduate student in the Faculty of Science in the University of Alberta. He was born in Edmonton, Alberta, but he lived most of his life in the Province of Saskatchewan. In that province, he received his elementary school and high school education. His father is of German descent, and his mother is of Czechoslovakian descent. They cannot speak their mother tongue, but they can understand what people say in their native languages. As they were brought up in Canada, they did not receive any formal instruction in their first languages. Jim has two brothers and one sister. Jim's father and mother both had their high school and university education in Canada. They all have decent jobs, and are living a quite well-to-do life. They are very supportive of Jim's education. Even today, Jim is still relying on their money to study in the university.

Jim started his elementary school in the late sixties. He finished his elementary and high school education in the Catholic school system. When he was describing the English language instruction in the elementary school, he said,

> Well, it was always taught as a separate course, I guess. In elementary school, between grade one and grade three, we learned phonics. We did not learn any of the new types of the reading, it was the traditional type of reading program. I think, it was mainly by sight reading. Sight learning is, instead of phonics, where you sound out your words, you look at the words, say, recognition, is what I am referring to. This is hard to remember, about grade four or five, we have more, at that time period, in the sixties there was sight learning. That is how I learned spelling and we had grammar, they emphasized the grammar, it is not like the whole language aspects of what it is now, I had some grammar teachers which were quite good, and they explained the grammar in language courses. Exactly how I learned to read, I don't know.
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

After Jim entered high school, he believed the focus of English instruction changed. The new focus was on reading literature in English language. After entering the university, he did not attend any courses on Linguistics, but he did continue his French language learning. He started his French language learning when he was 13. According to Jim, he could read some French, but could not communicate orally in that language.

5.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher has tried to describe the background of the three people interviewed in this study. Detailed and relevant quotations are provided in the text to help readers better comprehend the understanding each person has of the English language. An understanding of the competence in English is necessary to further understand how each responds to the metaphor comprehension task and the interview questions.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In this chapter, the researcher focused on developing themes. A theme, according to Bodgan and Biklen, is a concept or theory that emerges from the data (Bodgan and Biklen, 1992). It is also regarded as "some signal trend, some master conception, or key distinction" (Mills, 1959, p. 216) and possesses a "big idea" quality (Bodgan and Biklen, 1992, p. 186). This stage of data discussion is termed by Berg as "latent content analysis", meaning that at this stage, analysis should be extended to an interpretative reading for the symbolism or themes underlying the physically presented data (Berg, 1989). In order to uncover and develop the deep structural meaning conveyed by the data, within the framework of the research questions for this study, the researcher repeatedly read the data, made comparisons across the three cases in relation to the literature reviewed, the metaphor theories, the participants' background and English language education in China during the entire schooling period. While developing the themes from the data, the researcher made every effort to offer detailed excerpts from relevant statements which can serve to document his interpretations and "to be faithful to the data at hand and monitor self-consciously the inclination to force data into preconceptions" (Parker and Gehrke, 1986, p. 234).

The data used for discussion and analysis in this chapter includes the three participants' background information, their perspectives on metaphor comprehension, and their performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task. The performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task shows how each participant interprets the eleven metaphorical statements and the reasons for their interpretations. Variances of interpretations of some metaphorical statements were shown across the three cases. While the researcher was focusing on the differences, it was noted that there were many similarities. Details of the three participants' performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task can be found in **APPENDIX D, E** and **F**. The following are the eleven metaphorical statements in the simple metaphor comprehension task and a brief summary of the three participants' interpretations of them:

TABLE ONE: THE METAPHORICAL STATEMENTS IN THE SIMPLE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TASK AND THE PARTICIPANTS' INTERPRETATIONS TO THEM

Metaphorical Statements	John's Interpretation	David's Interpretation	Jim's Interpretation
1. His face was a beet that afternoon.	His face was red.	It might mean that he was angry. It could also mean that he was happy.	His face was red. Or he was sunburnt.
2. The prisoner's bare back was a barbershop pole.	The prisoner was using his bare back to send a message to his fellow inmates.	The prisoner was seriously beaten.	The prisoner was punished.
3. Police are hawks on the highway.	Police are watching closely on speeders.	Police always take advantage of their positions and make extra income.	Police are watching for speeders. Sometimes unjustly.
4. Swans are the ballerinas of the birds.	They are the most graceful birds in the bird family.	Swans are the most beautiful looking birds.	Swans are very graceful.
5. Peanut butter is the glue of sandwich fillings.	Peanut butter sticks two things together.	It joins two things together.	It sticks the sandwich together. It also means that peanut butter is not tasty.
6. Camels are the trucks of the desert.	Camels are useful animals. People use them to carry goods in desert.	Camels are the only travelling vehicles in the desert.	Camels are used to transport goods.
7. Apartment buildings are the giraffes of the city.	The apartment buildings in city are tall.	In cities, apartment buildings are tall.	They are tall.
8. Flowers are the calendars of the garden.	They tell season changes.	They tell season changes.	They tell season changes.
9. That morning my mouth was a desert.	It was dry.	It was dry.	It was dry.
10. The bread she baked was a rock.	It was hard.	It was hard.	It was hard.
11. The young child was the parrot of his family.	The child imitated other's words.	The child repeated what was said.	He was mimicking. He was noisy.

6.1 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN METAPHOR COMPREHENSION

6.1.1 Acculturation Process

It is widely accepted in both L1 and L2 research that culture is a component of an individual's world knowledge or a component of an individual's schemata. Ruhmelhart (1980) refers to schemata as "the building blocks of cognition" (Ruhmelhart, 1980, p. 59). He suggests that knowledge is compartmentalized into units and, when elicited, these units determine how we comprehend our world. Stimuli can be misinterpreted or are unintelligible if we do not possess the appropriate schemata. Questions such as, "How will acculturation to the target language group affect the learner's language learning and comprehension in the target language?", and "How does the length of the learner's immersion experience in the target language culture influence his or her language development?" always inspire researchers to conduct more investigations on the relationship between culture and language.

Brown's studies (1980) show that there are four distinct stages of acculturation which every learner will go through in adapting or assimilating himself or herself in a new culture. The first stage is the period of excitement and euphoria over the newness of the surroundings. Irving (1986) names this stage of acculturation as "Initial Euphoria". The second stage, which "emerges as the individual feels the intrusion of more and more cultural differences into his own image of self and security" (Brown, 1980, p. 132), is called "Culture shock" by Brown (1980) or "Irritability and hostility" by Irving (1986). Irving's term "Irritability and hostility" summarizes all the revealed feelings such as anger, hostility, frustration, unhappiness, loneliness, and homesickness of the learner at this stage. In this stage, according to Brown, the learner will feel disoriented and seek help and support from the people of his or her same culture in the target language setting. Adler describes culture shock as:

> Culture shock, then, is thought to be a form of anxiety that results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols of social intercourse. The individual undergoing culture shock reflects his anxiety and nervousness with cultural differences through any number of defense mechanisms: repression, regression, isolation and rejection. These defensive attitudes speak, in behavioral terms, of a basic underlying

> insecurity which may encompass loneliness, anger, frustration and self-questioning of competence. With the familiar props, cues, and clues of cultural understanding removed, the individual becomes disoriented, afraid of, and alienated from the things that he knows and understands.
> (Adler, 1972, p. 8)

The third stage is the learner's gradual acculturation to the target language group. Brown believes that this stage of acculturation can be typified by the concept of "culture stress". This concept refers to the stage where some problems of acculturation are solved, while other problems continue for some time but general progress is made. When the language learner begins to accept differences in thinking and feeling and slowly becoming more empathic with those in the target language culture (Brown, 1980). The last stage is near or full recovery from the culture shock. In this stage, the learner assimilates or adopts the new target language group culture, and regains self-confidence in the newly developed self in the target language culture context.

Brown also introduced the concept of anomie to his theory on the cultural description of second language acquisition. Anomie is a term from Durkheim (1897), and represents the feeling of social uncertainty or dissatisfaction. Brown writes,

> As an individual begins to lose some of the ties of his native culture and adapt to the second culture, he experiences feelings of chagrin or regret, mixed with the fearful anticipation of entering a new group. Anomie might be described as the first symptom of the third stage of acculturation, a feeling of homelessness, where one feels neither bound firmly to his native culture nor fully adapted to the second culture.
> (Brown, 1980, p. 133)

Brown also lists research done in the past to support his claims that "the mastery of the foreign language takes place hand in hand with feelings of anomie or homelessness, where the learner has moved away from his native culture but is still not completely assimilated or adjusted in the target culture" (Brown, 1980, p. 138).

Besides the concept of anomie, Brown also believes that Schumann's (Schumann, 1978, 1976) concept of social distance is also crucial to acculturation and second language acquisition. In Schumann's writing, the term "distance" is used in a very abstract way, and means the differences between the learner's native language culture and their target language group culture. Schumann believes that social distance consists of the following major influencing factors: 1) Is the second language learner group politically, culturally, technically or economically dominant, nondominant, or subordinate in relation to the target language group? 2) Is the integration pattern of the second language learner group to the target language group assimilation, acculturation, or preservation? 3) What is the second language learner group's degree of enclosure? 4) Is the second language learner group cohesive? 5) What is the size of the second language learner group? 6) Are the cultures of the two groups congruent? 7) What are the attitudes of the two groups toward each other? 8) What is the second language learner group's intended length of residence in the target language group area?

Using the above factors, Schumann hypothetically drew a "Good" and a "Bad" language learning cultural context. The following is Schumann's "Bad" language learning situation:

> One of the bad situations would be where the TL group views the 2LL group as dominant and the 2LL group views itself in the same way, where both groups desire preservation and high enclosure for the 2LL group, where the 2LL group is both cohesive and large, where the two cultures are not congruent, where the two groups hold negative attitudes toward each other, and where the 2LL group intends to remain in the TL area only for a short time.
>
> The second bad situation has all the characteristics of the first except that in this case, the 2LL group would consider itself subordinate and would also be considered subordinate by the TL group.
> (Schumann, 1976, p. 136)

A "Good" language learning situation, according to Schumann's model:

> would be one where the 2LL group is non-dominant in relation to the TL group, where both groups desire assimilation (or at least acculturation) for the 2LL group, where low enclosure is the goal of both groups, where the two cultures are congruent, where the 2LL group is small and non-cohesive, where both groups have positive attitudes towards each other, and where the 2LL group intends to remain in the target language area for a long time. Under such conditions social distance would be minimal and acquisition of the target language would be enhanced.
> (Schumann, 1976, p. 141)

Schumann (1978) believes that social distance factors will govern the overall learning situation, and therefore the social distance will influence the learner's amount of contact with the target language group, and the extent of the learner's acceptance of the target language input.

In light of the above theories, an examination of the two Chinese participants' data was conducted by the researcher. From the data, we can see that John did not have a good English language education in China. He started to learn English at middle school. At that time, the Great Cultural Revolution was in progress. Examination on any academic subject was banned in the school system. Performance on examinations was not regarded as a criterion for judging students' achievement. English language teaching was seriously interrupted during that period of political turmoil. John had only seriously studied English after he entered the university. Though during the time when John was in the university, the political, social and educational changes started to take place, still there were lots of things needing to be done. This was especially true in the field of English language teaching including the methodology, the materials, and the teacher education programs. They needed to be re-constructed and re-evaluated. In 1986, John was chosen as a candidate to go abroad for further study. Before John came to Canada, he had received two months full-time English language training. As noted previously, during this time he received training in speaking, listening, writing and some cultural and geographical knowledge of North America. The above is a little summary of John's English language education before he came to Canada. From this we can see that the political atmosphere and his family background did not allow John to gain much knowledge about English and North American culture during his schooling years.

The other Chinese participant, David, had a very different English language education experience. He was born in a family where education was being emphasized and children were encouraged to learn. After David entered the middle school, the Great Cultural Revolution came to an end. Great changes were made on the national educational policies. English education was being emphasized and was deemed the primary tool to attract western technology and science. English language teaching was stressed in school curriculum and was regarded as a required subject for the college entrance examination. David had a good English language teacher and good English language textbooks while he was in the middle school. By the time when David finished his middle school, his English was considered by his teacher as quite good. After David entered a medical university in 1981, he continued to study very hard on English. In 1991, after finishing his master's program, David came to the University of Alberta as a graduate student.

From the above review and the data presented, we can see that John had a worse English language education than David. The Cultural Revolution was in full swing when John was in his youth. He did not seriously study the English language until he entered university. The intensive English language training he received before he came to Canada was very brief. While on the contrary, David had his middle school and post-secondary education during the time when the educational systems in China were normalized. He not only had English language education, but it was a higher quality English language education. The next question that the readers naturally will ask is, "Then, why is there a difference in the interpretation of the simple metaphors in the simple metaphor comprehension task between John and David?". In order to answer this question, the researcher thinks it maybe wise to examine the two participants' immersion experience data in light of Brown (1980) and Schumann's (1976, 1978) theories.

From the presented data, we can see that John has experienced a very long period of euphoria, a brief period of culture shock and a period of gradual acculturation in his adjustment to the new culture, and now he is on his way to full assimilation or acculturation to the Canadian culture. Using Schumann's social distance theory, John's acculturation experience in Canada has provided him a very "Good" language learning situation.

The situation for David is very different. He arrived in Canada in 1991. During his first month's stay in Canada, he had his share of euphoria and believed that "Canada was a perfect place to live in the world". But unfortunately, this stage of euphoria was not a long lasting one. Shortly after the new term started, David immediately fell into the long-lasting culture shock phase of acculturation. After he arrived in Canada, David began to live in the HUB Mall with three other Chinese students. Now, David is very critical towards this capitalist society. He is not planning to stay in Canada for long. He believes that the Chinese students in Canada have no future. From the data, we can see that he was not acculturated at all. From his responses, it can be seen that he was in fact in the culture shock stage. Using Schumann's (1979, 1976) theory to evaluate David's language learning situation, it can be concluded that this is a "bad" language learning situation.

6.1.2 General Perspectives on Culture and Metaphor Comprehension

Culture is the patterned way of life. It is the context within which people exist, think, feel, and relate to other people. It is the "glue" that sticks a group of people together. John Donne wrote: "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." (Devotions, XVII). Culture is the continent, within which each individual is a part of the whole. Brown states that "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven such that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (Brown, 1980, 124). Many researchers in L2 reading (Steffensen, Joag-dev, and Anderson, 1979; Carrell, 1982; and Johnson, 1981) have proven this claim and shown that the cultural background of the reader, to a great extent, affects his or her comprehension of the second or foreign language. In this research, the two Chinese graduate students felt that culture also affected their comprehension of simple metaphors in English.

John believed that the Chinese student working or studying in Canada would experience great difficulty with the Canadian culture. For him, the Oriental and the Western cultures were fundamentally different. The rituals or customs which the Chinese perceived to be acceptable might be considered as unacceptable or impolite by the Canadians. John also indicated that the understanding of Canadian culture was crucial to the understanding of simple metaphors in English language.

> Because, you know, it is very different from two different cultures, like the Chinese and Canadian culture. Sometimes just opposite, so it is just totally different, so it can influence your understanding, for example, the Chinese and the Canadian have very different concept about the colors. I still remember that when I talked to one Canadian friend and we talk about the funeral, he told me that they went to funeral in white, but in Chinese, white, no, no, they don't, don't wear white, but in China we wear white flowers and they just do the opposite, in their wedding they wear white or they put white symbols, so you see, it is quite different. If you don't understand the culture, if you do something just according to your Chinese culture or tradition, maybe they will think that you are silly. Take the beet sentence for example, if I have never eaten beet, I will think the Chinese white beet. Even now I know that the Canadian beet is red, when I read it, I will look for the Chinese meaning first, and the Chinese concept will creep into my mind, then I thought, this is in Canada, Canadian beets are red, I must follow this line of thinking.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

David also expressed that culture was important in metaphor comprehension. He believed that people of different cultures would have different concepts of humor or other delicate aspects of the language. A shallow understanding of the Canadian culture would prevent the reader or the listener from understanding the spirit of the language.

> Because it seems there is a great difference between the Chinese culture and the western culture, the education that people received from the young age to elder age are very different, the selection of words during the speech, and the sense of humor, and many others are very different, so maybe when the foreigner says a word, then you understand in your own way, the Chinese way, but maybe the foreigner intends to express another meaning, so very often when the foreigners sit together and talk, they can use a word which is very appropriate to describe a thing, and they can laugh very loudly over a thing, but you can not, I think probably this is due to a shallow understanding of the cultural background.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

Contrary to John and David, Jim, who lived in Canada all of his life, did not mention culture as a factor in metaphor comprehension, and when the researcher employed the structured research questions to elicit responses, he gave a very different response. He seemed to believe that there was no unified culture in Canada. And therefore, there were no cultural factors that would affect the comprehension of metaphors.

> Like myself being a Canadian and I don't really think that we do have a big culture, like China for example. I mean they have got a culture. You can see that they got something there. I don't think we have a culture in Canada. We have got a mixture of multiculturalism, I cannot really say. Looking at Canada right now, I learned from all these people what metaphors mean. Canada is a multicultural country, and when I looked at it

> I don't know how much influence that has on the metaphors. Canada doesn't have a distinct culture, like the one that you had in China. Like you have thousands and thousands of years of culture where Canada hasn't; only hundreds of years. You know what I mean.
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

Jim believes that Canada is a multicultural country and that there is no such concept as Canadian culture. Jim confused the concept of culture with race and ancient civilization, and did not believe that Canada has its own distinct Canadian culture. In fact, according to the previously mentioned definition of culture by Brown (1980), the multiculturalism in Canada is Canada's culture. The Canadian culture is a multiculture. Jim also acknowledged that, "I learned from all these people what metaphors mean."

6.1.3 Culture and the Attribute Presentations in the Topic and the Vehicle of a Metaphorical Statement

As the researcher had stated earlier, in Ortony's theory (1979), the first and foremost point is that the characteristic of a simple metaphor is that it is not a literal statement. In order to be intelligible, the reader cannot perceive it as literal. Ortony (1979) points out that a point of similarity between the topic and vehicle must exist and should be uncovered because it imparts the intended meaning of the metaphor. The topic and the vehicle in the metaphorical statement, with each consisting of a set of attributes or features, according to Ortony, should be perceived as sharing common matching attributes. Each attribute or feature is a meaning presenting an element of the topic or the vehicle. Ortony (1980) further elaborates on the concept of attribute as including "properties known or generally believed to be true of the things being compared, attitudes towards them, and beliefs about them" (Ortony, 1980, p. 12). In the present study, the researcher found that among the three participants of this study, there is a difference of attribute presentations of the same concept. For one participant, the concept includes a particular attribute, but for the other it does not. This presentation of attribute is due to influences of cultural knowledge. This point can be clearly illustrated by the three participants' interpretation of the metaphorical statement "Police are hawks on the highway". The following are John, David and Jim's interpretations.

After reading the statement, John interpreted this statement as "police are watching closely on somebody who is speeding, on the highway". When John was asked to further explain, he regarded the predatory nature of the hawk as the salient feature of the vehicle. He also mentioned that the police patrolled the highway in Canada for traffic regulations. From John's responses, we can see that his attribute presentation of the concept "police" in the context of "on the highway" includes the attribute that the police are patrolling the highway to stop speeders and anyone breaking the regulations would be seriously fined if he or she were caught.

David interpreted this sentence as, "policemen cannot always be as good as people had expected and they sometimes steal things, too.Um..., they sometimes also try to find some chances to earn some money which is not so good". He also recognized the predatory nature of the hawk as the most salient feature. But he failed to point out that "the police" in the context of "on the highway" had the attribute that the police patrol the highway to stop speeders. Some other probing questions were posed by the researcher to elicit relevant information, but there was no clear indication in the responses that David related his attribute presentation to the concept of "police". David's failure to point out the attribute was due to his immature knowledge of Canadian culture. He is a more recent immigrant to Canada and he lived in Hub Mall with three other Chinese students, so his acculturation process is rather slow.

Jim, as a native speaker of the English language, after reading the sentence, immediately pointed out that this statement means that the police were looking closely for speeders on the highway. He noted that the hawks have very keen eyesight and are constantly looking for their prey as the most salient attribute for the vehicle. He also acknowledged that patrolling the highway and stopping speeders was an attribute of the concept of "police" in the context of "on the highway".

From John, David and Jim's interpretations and their responses on this metaphorical statement, we can clearly identify that there is a difference in their interpretation and in their attribute presentations of the concept of "police" in the context of "on the highway". These differences in the attribute presentations are due to culture differences, and the differences in the acculturation process of the two Chinese participants. The cultures in China and Canada are fundamentally different. China is a developing country, the standard of living for ordinary people is not as high as it is here in Canada, most people could not afford to buy a car. The common vehicle for people to travel is the bicycle. Besides this there is no highway in China. The traffic regulations in China are not as strict as they are in Canada and there are fewer traffic signs on the roads. David had been in Canada for only about two years. From his experience in Canada, he did not have much contact with the Canadian culture. We can see from his explanation that he is here in Canada all by himself and does not own a car. He had not experienced the North American "on wheels" style of life. On the contrary, John is quite different from David. John had immigrated to Canada. His family is here in Canada. He drove to shopping and has travelled in Canada. He has nearly acculturated into the Canadian culture. Comparing the two Chinese graduate students' interpretation and their presentation of attributes with those of Jim's, we can roughly judge the two Chinese students' acculturation process and its impact on metaphor interpretation.

6.1.4 Culture and the Attribute Salience in the Vehicle of a Metaphorical Statement

According to Ortony (1979), the topic and the vehicle in the metaphorical statement not only share common matching attributes, but also these attributes must be of unequal salience or prominence for the two subjects. Specifically, the matching attributes in the vehicle of the metaphorical statement must be more salient than its matching attribute in the topic. Mate defines the concept of salience imbalance as "A condition in which the salience level of the matching attributes for the topic and the vehicle are perceived as unequal. The matching attribute is more salient for the topic and less salient for the vehicle resulting in directionality and a degree of diagonality from the vehicle to the topic" (Mate, 1987, p. 7). It is in fact the reader's estimation of the degree of prominence and relevance of a particular attribute in the vehicle which affects comprehension. This salience imbalance characteristic of a metaphor is often referred as "the low/high condition" or "ascending mode" (Ortony, 1979; and Mate, 1987). Numerous research results (Evan and Gamble, 1987; and Mate and Malicky, 1990) indicate that this notion of salience imbalance is plausible. In this study, the researcher found evidence in the three participants' interpretation of the statement "His face was a beet that afternoon" that culture can control or determine the reader's estimation of the salient attribute in the vehicle.

When John was asked to interpret this metaphor, he immediately responded, "this means his face is red". He explained that the reason he interpreted it this way was that he had heard other people say phrases like this and even had eaten beets before. He perceived that the matching attribute between the topic and the vehicle in this metaphorical statement was that they were both red. John said that "Red" was the salient feature in the concept of "beet" and also pointed out that he only encountered this word after he had arrived in Canada. He said that the beets he is familiar with in China are white, which is very different from those that he has seen in Canada. But in this context, he pointed out that he only thought that red was salient, because he said, "As this is in English, and we are now in Canada, so I have to interpret this, this way."

When David was asked to interpret this sentence, he read the whole sentence, then told the researcher that he did not know the meaning of the word "beet" and asked to use a dictionary for the word meaning. From an English and Chinese dictionary, he found that the Chinese counterpart for the word "beet" was "TIANCAI". Then he struggled to interpret the meaning of this metaphorical statement. He tried several different interpretations and finally came to the interpretation of the statement as someone who was very happy that afternoon, and the happiness was embedded in his sweet smiles. He interpreted the common matching attribute of the topic and the vehicle in the metaphorical statement as the sweetness. He pointed out that the salient attribute for the concept "beet" in this context was its sweetness. He reasoned that way because the beet was sweet and people could produce sugar from it. It is very clear that due to the lack of cultural knowledge, David was unable to recognize or identify "red" as an attribute to the concept of "beet".

After reading this, Jim explained that there are two levels of meaning this sentence is trying to convey. He said the first level the statement tries to convey was that the face is very red and the second level is that he got sunburnt that afternoon. For Jim, it is very clear that the matching attribute of the topic and vehicle in this statement was redness and red was the most salient feature of the concept of "beet" in this context. The reason that he perceived this way is that he had heard and used such phrases before and, according to him, it is quite logical to reason this way.

From the above examples, we can see that culture determined the reader's estimation of attribute salience in the vehicle. The attribute salience in the vehicle, according Ortony (1979), would determine the reader's interpretation of metaphor.

6.2 THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE IN METAPHOR COMPREHENSION

What is experience? This is a very philosophical question. John Dewey defines experience as a combination of an active and a passive element. He says, "On the active hand, experience is trying--a meaning which is made explicit in the connected term experiment. On the passive, it is undergoing. When we experience something we act upon it, we do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return: such is the peculiar combination" (Dewey, 1916, p. 139). Our experience has a vital impact on our way of thinking, our way of reacting, and our language. Mao stresses the importance of experience to our thought. He says, "Where do our correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the minds? No. They come from social experience, and from it alone" (Mao, 1967, p. 116). How does individual experience affect metaphor comprehension?

During the interview, John first pointed out that the main factor that influenced the comprehension of simple metaphors in the English language is the reader's personal experience. The knowledge that the reader gains from experience makes the reader feel very confident to construct the meaning of the metaphor. He employed the metaphorical statement "Flowers are the calendars of the garden" as an example to demonstrate the role of experience in metaphor comprehension. He further pointed out that his direct experience with the target metaphor was vital to its understanding, but he also mentioned that his indirect experience with the target metaphor could contribute to comprehension also. He stated,

> If I have the experience then I would feel very confident to tell the meaning of the metaphor statements. The reason for me to say so is very simple. Take these metaphors for example, some of them are very easy for me, but some other are not so easy for me. Take the sentence "Flowers are the calendars of the garden" for example, I have the direct experience, I know, from the calendar, you can know the date, the season, and I also know that different flowers will bloom in different seasons, and usually in the garden where you will plant a lot of flowers. So, from the flowers in the garden, when it flowers and when it does not flower, or when it is just the leaf will turn to green or turn to yellow, so you can judge the flowers change to see what season it is. It will become very easy and simple. If you don't have the direct experience, it would be very hard for you to interpret the metaphor.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

David compared the effects of individual experience with family background and education. He used Russian revolutionary writer Gorkey as an instance to exemplify the importance of social experience in personal development. He believed that the reader's individual experience can contribute more the metaphor comprehension than the other two factors.

Jim believed that his past experience influences simple metaphor comprehension. He stated that his work experience, education experience, family and travel experience were all factors that contributed to his understanding of metaphor.

From all three participants' interpretation of the metaphorical statements presented in the simple metaphor comprehension task, we can see that if the three participants had common experiences, no matter which stages of the acculturation process they are in (the two Chinese students were in different stages of acculturation), and no matter how far apart the home cultures of the participants are, they would still interpret the metaphor with very little variance. On the contrary, if their individual experience is different, as the data has revealed, even though they come from the same Chinese culture, they will interpret it differently. People from different cultures will have far greater variance in interpretation. John's interpretation on the metaphorical statement "The prisoner's bare back was a barbershop pole" is,

> I think the barbershop pole is a sign indicates that there is a barbershop nearby, the prisoner's bare back, the prisoner bared his back, I think this must indicates something, normally, the prisoner should wear the prisoner's uniform, that uniform is different from the ordinary people's, he bared his back maybe indicate that they were going to do something, maybe this is a symbol for other prisoners, and this tells the others that he is ready to do, this maybe is just a message that one prisoner try to convey to other prisoners without letting the police know what they are doing, and they do this just try to avoid being discovered by the prison guards. That is how I understand this sentence.
> (1993/06/01)

From the above, we can also see that John is not fully acculturated to the Canadian society. From the pilot study, it can be seen that all the 15 Canadian participants interpreted this statement with a unified meaning. It is hard to distinguish experience and culture very clearly in this little study, but to a very great extent, experience just like culture will determine the reader's interpretation of the metaphor.

6.3 THE ROLE OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN METAPHOR COMPREHENSION

The two Chinese participants showed adequate English language proficiency before they entered this university, they passed the TOEFL. An examination of the academic papers that they wrote, and their performance on the metaphor task, all show that they had a very good command of the English language. From the two Chinese students' background information data, we can see that David had better English language instruction, while John on the other hand, compared with David, did not receive sufficient language education in China. According to Krashen's theory and David and John's descriptions of their English language instruction, the knowledge that John and David had of English before each came to Canada was "learnt knowledge" mainly gained through classroom "learning". To Krashen, the concept of "learning" refers to the formal classroom instruction. "Learnt knowledge", according to Krashen, can only serve as a monitor during the actual language performance and it had a very limited function. From this, the researcher is not aiming to come to the conclusion that John had better English proficiency than that of David because John had acquired more knowledge of English than David. The researcher mentioned the above theory only for the purpose of reminding readers that the above point can cause some differences in the two Chinese students' understanding of English language.

John believed that the reader's English language level had a vital role in metaphor comprehension. According to him, if the reader's English was at a very low level, it would be hard for him to understand normal literal language, not to mention the understanding of simple metaphors in English. The reader's English must reach a certain level, then an understanding of metaphors in English might be possible. He also pointed out that a high level of English proficiency would not necessarily guarantee the reader that he or she would have no difficulties in understanding metaphors in English.

> I think the reader's English level has a vital role in metaphor comprehension. Because, if your English is at a very low level, the very basic level, it is very hard for you to understand normal sentence, not to mention understand metaphors in English. And your English level must

> reach certain level, then it is possible for you to understand metaphors. For the first two years, the beginners, I don't think that they will understand metaphors... Even if the you have a very high level of English proficiency, we cannot be 100 percent sure that he will be able to understand metaphors in English language. Because he still needs to learn some other things, he still needs to study more about the people, and the culture.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

David believed that the English level was important to the understanding of metaphors in English. He also mentioned that the first language level of the reader was equally important. He believed that if a person knew two different languages, the knowledge of one language would be able to transfer to the other language.

> English level, of course is very important. Chinese, I think is also very important. Suppose one's Chinese language ability is better than others, his ability to express in Chinese is better than the other and his composition or oral presentation in Chinese is better than others. If your Chinese is good, you may be able to understand metaphors in Chinese very well, much better than that whose Chinese is not so good. There is a bridge or some kind of commonality between these different languages; the Chinese and the English language. I think, if your native language is quite good, you may understand other languages fairly well. I think no matter what, there is always something common between any different languages... English and Chinese are all languages, though written differently, sound differently, sometimes maybe the order, the position or the structure of the sentences are very different, but anyway, in any of these two languages, there is a way to express your feeling. You know, a lot figurative language uses in English, we Chinese people can also accept, and use them in our speech.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

Jim also believed that the reader should know the language. But to him, the meaning of the topic and the vehicle, the attribute of the topic and the vehicle were more important. He indicated the knowledge of vocabulary is very important.

> You have to know the language. If you don't know the meaning of the word in the first place, you can't make it applicable to the other meanings, Like a metaphor, in some way it is contradictory, and so, like the peanut butter sentence in the little comprehension test, you have to know the consistency of the peanut butter, what it is like, and then you know what is like glue so to speak in that context, which you want really using, peanut butter, per se, like you eat it, I think absolutely, you have to know the meaning.
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

From the three participants' performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task, we can see if they do not know the word, it is very hard for them to guess the meaning. From David's interpretation, we can see even though the reader had a general knowledge of the specific word, he may not be able to understand the metaphor due to the lack of knowledge of the specific attribute in the topic or vehicle.

6.4 THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN METAPHOR COMPREHENSION

From the interview data, the researcher found that all three participants believed that the level of intellectual functioning was a factor that influenced the quality of metaphor comprehension.

John said,

> Intelligence will involve everything that a person does. In the case of metaphor comprehension, of course it is very important.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

David believed that the reader's intelligence and the power of imagination could influence his or her comprehension of metaphors. He stated,

> If an idiot and a clever person are under the same situation, the comprehension will be very different, Right? Even if people are at the same level of intelligence, there is an another problem of brain development of the right brain and the left brain, if one has a well-developed left brain, he or she may have a better language ability. Probably if the Chinese student can understand Chinese metaphors very well, he or she may understand metaphors in English very well. I think that the reader's imagination is also a factor. Imagination is very important, if a person can imagine and can associate things alike together, then he can gain some insight of what is going on in the sentence
> (David: 1993/06/07)

Jim also regarded intelligence as a major factor influencing the comprehension of metaphor. He said,

> It is very controversial on how to use the IQ or anything. Just for a reference point, or use it specifically, because the IQ 25 and the IQ 190; you are going to understand a lot better than the other. I mean, just no one can argue against that. I will go back to experience, knowing people who have low intelligence or who has low IQ, and they don't understand certain things. I just know that, from reading, like I said, and working with these people. I am not saying that they don't know anything, in fact some are very clever, but there are lots of things, they just don't understand... I think our society has put a lot of importance on it [intelligence].

(Jim: 1993/06/04)

The review of literature of this thesis shows that recent research done on understanding metaphor mainly examined young children of different age groups and their developmental abilities to use and interpret metaphors. Some research shows that children can perform metaphorical tasks at a very young age (Gentner, 1977). In general, the research on metaphor comprehension indicates that children's ability to understand metaphor increases with age (Asch and Nerlove, 1960; Billow, 1975; Demorest, Silberstein, Gardner, and Winner, 1983; Honeck, Sowry, and Voegtle, 1978; and Vosniadou and Ortony, 1983). That is to say, children's performance differences on metaphor at different ages are due to innate developmental cognitive ability. There have also been numerous attempts to show that the development of the ability to understand metaphors is tied to Piagetian language development stages (Billow, 1975; and Cometa and Eson, 1978). It can be seen that the competence in metaphor comprehension among young children is a late developing ability in native speakers of English.

Based on the first language acquisition and second language acquisition both with children and adults research literature, Krashen developed his Natural Order Hypothesis. This hypothesis indicates that learners may follow a more or less invariant order in the acquisition of formal grammatical features. Some aspects of grammar are acquired early and some are acquired late. It affirms that grammatical structures are acquired in a predicable order. Some other researchers in the second language research expanded Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis to other components of language performance, and argued that the ESL children, even adult ESL students, would follow the same developmental patterns in the acquisition of English language competence that the native speakers of English language do in a sequential order according to the degree of the difficulties of the competence, but differing in the aspect of time cycles (Bailey, Madden, Krashen, 1974; Richards, 1971). If the above conclusion is true, then the logical assumption which can be reached for this study is that the ability of the two Chinese students to understand metaphors in English would also be late-developing. But there is no research that has been done to test this assumption. Historically, though indefensible, there were assumptions that the difficulty that the second language learners had in comprehending English was due to cognitive deficit (Jesperson, 1934; Turner, 1949; and Bereiter and Engleman, 1966).

6.5 OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING METAPHOR COMPREHENSION

6.5.1 The Linguistic Context of the Metaphor

The linguistic context of a metaphor, as defined by Vosniadou, refers to "the common ground created on the basis of the speaker's and the listener's previous linguistic communication: what has been said or what can be inferred on the basis of what has been said" (Vosniadou, 1989, p. 160). Most of the recent research (Black, 1962; Smith, 1973; Verbrugge and McCarrel, 1977; Ortony, 1977; Vosniadou, 1989) shows that the linguistic context of the metaphor plays an important role in metaphor comprehension. The researcher of this study employed a passage with a metaphor in it, trying to use this as an example to elicit information from the three participants on the effects of context on the comprehension of metaphor.

The two Chinese students both suggested that context played an important role in their comprehension of metaphor. They suggested that it could help them to guess out the meaning of the unknown words and orient them to the correct interpretation. John stated that the context where the metaphor appeared was an important help to the comprehension of metaphor. He indicated that the context would provide clues to the meaning of the metaphor. He said,

> To understand a metaphor you must put something into a situation, then you will understand it. The context, or situation is important. If you just pull out a single word maybe it means very different things, and many several things. But if you put it into a situation, so it may mean only one or two things, there are not many choices, even if the context is not familiar... It

> can also help, it would be much easier for you to comprehend the metaphor, that is what I said. The simple sentence maybe mean several things, but if there is a context, at least you can understand part of it.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

David said that the linguistic context could assist the reader to comprehend the metaphors by providing context clues to the target metaphor.

On the contrary, the Canadian student seemed to believe that the context was important, but the meaning of the word was also important. If he knew the meaning or had heard the metaphor used before, he would be able to interpret it immediately without consultation of the context where it occurred. He pointed out that the context had some influence on understanding if the metaphor has an obscure meaning. Knowing the meaning of the metaphor was of great importance in order to understand the context.

The two Chinese students' performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task and their interview data seemed to agree with Black's view (1962) that the linguistic context would limit the interaction between the topic and the vehicle when a reader was confronting a metaphor. The linguistic context could help the Chinese students produce better interpretations of the target metaphors.

6.5.2 Socioeconomic Status

Analysis of the factors that affect an individual student's success or failure in educational competition has often occupied a major place in educational research. Recently educational achievement is regarded as a necessary precursor to advancement in the society (Gibson, 1986). The greater the importance attached to education as a factor in social mobility, the greater the attention paid to reasons for, or correlates of, educational failure. One factor that seems generally to be accepted as having a bearing on academic achievement is the socioeconomic status. Gibson studied the relationship between social class and educational attainment and indicated that pupils from lower socioeconomic families achieve less well than their counterparts from middle or upper socioeconomic families on almost any measure of educational attainment.

From John's interview data, we can see that he believed socioeconomic status of the reader would influence his or her comprehension of simple metaphor in English. Because, according to him, socioeconomic status of the reader would determine his or her education and experience, and therefore influence his or her linguistic and cognitive abilities. He said,

> While when I was young, I learnt in the school that people from different social classes will speak different language, though they are all speak in the Chinese and in the Chinese society, but they use the language representing their own class interests. I think this is true. I was here in this University all year around. I only contact with the professors, scholars and researchers of this university and other universities. You know, those people are belong to the upper class here, and now I lived in Michener near the university, most of the people there are all graduate students of this university. To tell you the truth, I have a little problem to understand workers' English. They speak very loudly and very roughly. I don't know whether I will have difficulty to understand the metaphors that they use in their speech, because, as you know, I have few contacts with them, maybe this is the reason that I could not understand them. I think if I have difficulty to understand their ordinary language, I might have difficulty to understand their metaphors in English too.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

David did not directly point out the socioeconomic status of the reader, but he mentioned that the family background, parents' education and their position in the society, along with experience are important elements for the construction of the reader's language ability. John and David are from a socialist country, but still they were able to perceive the social class differences in that society. Jim did agree with John that the socioeconomic status of the reader would influence metaphor interpretation a great deal. Jim believed that if a person is high up in the society, he or she would have more access to knowledge and could have a better understanding of the language used.

From John and Jim's data, we can see that they both pointed out that there was a difference in language use between the different social classes. Specifically, John pointed out that he had difficulty in understanding common workers' English. David, on the other hand, did not seem to realize the differences between the language uses among people from different social classes. This finding seems to agree with Bernstein's restricted and elaborated codes theory. According to Bernstein (1971), restricted codes are concrete, down-to-earth ways of communication. They are linguistic codes which to a great extent rely on non-verbal cues to establish meaning or are dependent on the context for decoding. This form of communication is usually derived from the communication of the people of lower social and economic stratum or the working class. While on the other hand, the elaborated codes are abstract, decontextulized ways of communication. People from different social and economic classes use different linguistic codes, and their codes promote different metaphor usage. This surely can create comprehension problems for people from other social classes, not to mention for people from another country whose native language is not English.

6.5.3 Motivation

It can be seen very clearly from the interview data that the three participants all believed that the reader's motivation would influence his or her interpretation greatly. John said,

> I have that experience, if you don't want to ask, if you don't have the motivation to know what is this so you will never know it. So that is what I told my friends don't be shy to ask if you don't understand it. So, I just ask, and they tell me. I think this is very important in the learning of the metaphors in English.
> (John: 1993/06/01)

David acknowledged that motivation of the reader was very important in reading comprehension.

> Of course, if you are interested in it, and you have the motivation, take me for example, when you interview me, I am very active to help, I just try my best to think, and very concentrated, under such condition one can get a good answer.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

Jim believed that motivation can greatly influence the comprehension of metaphors.

> Definitely, motivation, is a factor, if I don't know, I will look it up, but I guess, most of the time, I know what they were, in metaphors, yes, motivation, is a factor, if you aren't sure about a metaphor.
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

It is easy to say that the success in a task is because of the fact that the person who engaged in this task is "motivated". It is easy to conclude in the second language learning that if a learner has the motivation, he or she will be successful in acquiring the target language, because countless research and experiments in learning have shown that motivation is a key to learning. But what is motivation? What does it mean to the second language learners? How does motivation influence simple metaphor comprehension?

Motivation is a very broad concept. It is commonly believed to be the basic needs and drives of the human being that moves one to a particular action. Brown (1980, p. 112-113) identified six basic needs or drives of human organisms which undergird the construct of motivation. They are:

> (1) the need for exploration, for seeing "the other side of the mountain," for probing the unknown;
> (2) the need for manipulation, for operating--to use Skinner's term--on the environment and causing change;
> (3) the need for activity, for movement and exercise, both physical and mental;
> (4) the need for stimulation, the need to be stimulated by the environment, by other people, or by ideas, thoughts, and feelings;
> (5) the need for knowledge, the need to process and internalize the results of exploration, manipulation, activity, and stimulation, to resolve contradictions, to quest for solutions to problems and for self-consistent systems of knowledge;
> (6) finally, the need for ego enhancement, for the self to be known and to be accepted and approved of by others.

A motivated learner who wants to learn a foreign language can be clearly viewed as fulfilling some of the needs mentioned above. Two of the best-known researchers on motivation and its effects on second language acquisition, Gardner and Lambert, define motivation as consisting of two kinds in the field of second language. They are integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. They say that "if the student wishes to learn more about the other cultural community because he is interested in it in an open-minded way, to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that other group" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p. 3), then, this motivational force can be called integrative motivation. Someone motivated in this sense exhibits a sincere and personal interest in the people and the culture represented by the group. On the contrary, "if the purposes of language study reflect the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement, such as getting ahead in one's occupation" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p. 3), then this motivational force would be labeled as instrumental motivation. It reflects the practical value and advantages of learning a new language. It is suggested from the research (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1980) that compared with instrumental motivation, integrative motivation is superior for a second language learner to acquire a second language, because research has shown that it can roughly determine the success of the learner's second language acquisition.

In 1986, Bailey related this concept of integrative and instrumental motivation to the intrinsic and extrinsic differences in motivation to see the source of the second language learner's motivation. Her proposition can be illustrated in the following table:

TABLE TWO: BAILEY'S MODEL OF L2 LEARNERS' MOTIVATION

	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation
Integrative Motivation	L2 learner wishes to integrate with the L2 culture (e.g., for immigration or marriage)	Someone else wishes the L2 learner to know the L2 for integrative reasons (e.g., Canadians wish and provide facilities for the Chinese students to acculturate)
Instrumental Motivation	L2 learner wishes to achieve goals utilizing L2 (e.g., for a career)	External power wants L2 learner to learn L2 (e.g., the universities in China send Chinese students to Canada for English language training)

From this table, we can see that Bailey extended the range of the source of motivation. She believes that motivation not only stems from within the second language learner, but from other people and the target language culture at large as well. This theory, in a sense, can be associated with the Acculturation Model and Krashen's affective filter model of second language acquisition theories. Therefore, I think if the student is motivated, he or she will acquire more English language, will be more acculturated to the target language culture and therefore will improve his or her understanding of metaphors in English.

6.6 PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTIONS OF HOW TO HELP THE CHINESE STUDENTS UNDERSTAND SIMPLE METAPHORS AND HOW TO TEACH ENGLISH TO THE CHINESE STUDENTS

6.6.1 Build the Knowledge of the Attribute Presentation of the Topic and the Vehicle

Ortony (1979) believes that the comprehension of metaphor can only happen when the topic and vehicle in the metaphorical statement are perceived to share common matching attributes which are of unequal salience. Specifically, Ortony pointed out that the common matching feature should be more salient in the vehicle than in the topic. Attribute presentations of the topic and the vehicle, and the salience imbalance are the most important constructs for Ortony's metaphor theory.

From the research data, we could see that John and Jim mentioned and realized the importance of the attribute presentation of the topic and the vehicle. John said,

> I think, first, the teacher should explain some words to me, the details of the words, how this word associated with the other words, for example, if the teacher teach the word "Chair", he should mentioned, the legs, the seat, the word chairman, chairperson, the functions of chair, the materials that workers use to make chair, how chair differ from bench, and etc., all those little things, but you know those little things make the big difference, the concept of the word, the related concepts of the word should also be mentioned.
> (John: 1993/06/09)

John suggested that the key words were very important in the comprehension of the metaphor. In order to help the Chinese students to better understand the simple metaphors in English language, according to John, the instructor of English should explain the attributes of the word, illustrate its usage and demonstrate its relationship with other words and concepts while teaching vocabulary to students.

The meaning of metaphor, according to Jim, is fundamental to the understanding of metaphor. He proposed that the teaching of metaphor should include an explanation of the meaning of the target metaphor to the learners. He said,

> If it is a metaphor, I think you have to tell people what does it mean... You can learn meaning from things, like by reading passages, and reading things... Maybe somebody can get the aspect of bright. Um, her eyes were candles, that means that it is being bright, like the barber pole, the glue, the peanut butter, if that is put into a context. I think it could be difficult, and I think, going back again you have to know the words, and if you got some obscure metaphors in there, you have to tell the person. I really think that you have to tell, explain the metaphors. When you teach metaphors, you can ask first whether you can understand certain words, and some may understand the words, but if they don't have any idea, or totally, totally bizarre, you have to tell, and explain to the students. If I am a student, I will expect the teacher to explain it to me... I have never been taught on metaphors, I think metaphor is very similar to simile, and I think simile is easy to understand, if you can change metaphor into simile there might be a way.
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

Jim believed that the meaning of "certain words" were of crucial importance in the comprehension of a metaphorical statement and that if the students were unaware of the meaning, then the instructor should explain the meaning. David also suggested that the instructors of English should tell stories about the word to the students.

6.6.2 Contextualize the Simple Metaphors

The linguistic context of a metaphor, as most of the recent research (Black, 1962; Smith, 1973; Verbrugge and McCarrel, 1977; Ortony, 1977; Vosniadou, 1989) suggests, plays an important role in metaphor comprehension. The two Chinese students suggested that the context played an important role in their comprehension of simple metaphorical statements and suggested that it could help them to guess the meaning of the unknown words and orient them to the correct interpretation. The Canadian student seemed to suggest that the context was important, but the meaning of the word was more important. He believed that if you knew the meaning or had heard of the use of a metaphor before, you would be able to interpret it immediately without the consultation of the context in which it occurred.

In order to help the students understand simple metaphor, Jim suggested that the metaphor should be put into a meaningful context. He said,

> Unless the context is very clear, it has to be an awfully good context, that is you have to talk on it back and forth, and very, very explicitly. OK, let's use a different metaphor, "It is a nice day if you are a duck", now, I would use that metaphor on a day it is pouring rain, OK? Now, the students are going to look at me, "It is a nice day if you are a duck", now if you know what does a duck mean, and I looked out of the window, and "Oh, yes, the duck likes water". Because it is raining, OK, if you put this into perspective, that if you like be outside in rain, it is nice day for you, but if it is a bright sunny day, and I walked up to him, and I say, it is a nice day if you are a duck, I mean there is no context. That is what I said earlier, it depends on how explicit the context is. You have to have an incoming context, like very, very explicitly, like it is raining outside, whereas, if it is just a comment, it would not come in.
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

He used the metaphor "It is a nice day if you are a duck." as an example to illustrate the importance of context in metaphor comprehension. Jim believed that if the context is very explicit, and the students are aware of the meaning of the topic and the vehicle, it would be easier for the students to understand the metaphor. David suggested that the instructor should demonstrate to the students how and in what situations the metaphors are used while explaining the metaphors.

6.6.3 Formal Instruction on Metaphor

John and David suggested that the basic principles of metaphor should be taught in the English language classrooms. John said,

> The teacher must give some necessary principles of this. I think the teaching is not only help the students to understand the metaphors, the main purpose is to let the students to read and write some things use the metaphors, so you must give some basic principles of how to use this. I think, it is very necessary to learn to understand the metaphors, because if you did not understand the meaning of metaphor, you probably will use it wrongly.
> (John: 1993/06/09)

John believes that instruction on the principles of metaphor not only can help the students understand metaphors but also can help students produce metaphor in their utterances and their writing.

David suggested that the instructor should first explain the meaning of the metaphor and then give students examples of how the metaphor was used in the natural communication setting. He said,

> The teacher should give students more chances to listen to the daily English conversations, or tell the students more stories about the words, or give them more common usage, for example, the metaphors that you had gave me before, suppose if you put those on the blackboard before, or you had use them in you speech, or you play a short video for them, and you explain it immediately after you finished it, tell them what they are talking about in the video, so by doing this, they may have an impression of how to use them, and then gradually they can start to use them. You know, first you must have heard of this and then you can use it.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

6.6.4 Teaching North American Culture in the English Language Class

From the two Chinese students' interview, it was found that both John and David had recognized the power of the target language culture in the comprehension of metaphors. David used the differences in writing style between the Chinese and English to illustrate the differences of the cultures. He said,

> I have mention many, many times that the culture of the target language is important, it will not only influence metaphor comprehension, it will also influence other things, like writing, when you write an English essay, you have to write in the English way, otherwise, it is very hard for them to understand, people even think differently, if the students want to do well in the Canadian universities or American universities, or I think even if you do business in China with the English speaking people, knowing the culture is very important. Once a friend told me, formerly we have a kind of battery made in Shanghai, it is of very good quality, but it does not sell very well in the western countries. Do you know why? Because the brand of the battery is "White elephant". "White elephant" in the West is not a word with very good denotation.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

John believes that language learning without learning the culture is not a successful English program. He stressed many times that teaching North American culture is crucial to the understanding of metaphor. He suggested that a comparative study of the Chinese and the Canadian culture would better benefit the students' comprehension of simple metaphors in English language.

The importance of culture learning has been recognized by many researchers in the second language research field. Damen believes that "language learning implies and embraces culture learning" (Damen, 1987, p. 4). She states,

> While cultural guidance is seldom part of the stated curriculum of the ESL, EFL, or any language classroom, it is nonetheless often a part of the hidden agenda, a pervasive but unrecognized dimension, coloring expectations, perceptions, reactions, teaching and learning strategies, and is, more often than not, a contributing factor in the success or failure of second or foreign language learning and acquisition. (Damen, 1987, p. 4)

Damen (1987) stressed that the ESL or EFL program should include culture learning and that the awareness of intercultural communication skills has to be part of the curriculum. As John pointed out Chinese and western cultures are very different, therefore it is quite relevant to follow Damen's admonitions to teach English-speaking culture to the Chinese students in China.

6.6.5 A Change in English Language Teaching in China

In the data, Jim suggested that the English proficiency of the Chinese students is important. He said,

> The English language proficiency is crucial for the Chinese students to understand metaphor, you just tell them the meaning. If the student's language level is low, they don't have the command of the language. There will be a greater explanation to the meaning of the words and to explain it and to try and put something into a context that they could understand. I fully realized that you have to put it into the context of the person, and when you use the metaphor, you can put the metaphor into their context too. A lot of metaphors can be put into their context, and I think that they should have read, or you should have been able to talk about the subject that they would understand before you throw a metaphor out. They just have to know what a duck was, what water was, and they have to know all these things...
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

Jim was indicating that in order to better understand the metaphor, the student should first perhaps have a better command of English language. John and David echoed the same concern. They further pointed out the method of English language instruction in universities and colleges was out-of-date and needs to be reformed. David pointed out the need for change in the field of English language teaching in China. He said,

> The method that the English teachers are using to teaching English is hard and not sufficient, English should be spoken in the class, they have to pay too much attention to grammar. They should pay attention to listening, speaking and writing too.
> (David: 1993/06/07)

John even suggested a plan for change. He said,

> From my son's English learning, I think grammar is not important. Real English situation, I think, is more important than anything. The key point is to have a good English situation. Have more foreign teachers in the classrooms... The other thing is to show the students what the real life or real things existed in the other countries, such as what a sandwich is look like or taste. Try to let the students know the real world, such as show the students films on the tradition, some pictures of the sight, the climate.
> (John: 1993/06/09)

According to these two Chinese students, in order to achieve better English language learning results, changes must be made on the language teaching approach in China.

6.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, comparisons across the three cases were made in relation to the research questions. Each participant's background, education, life experience in Canada and perspectives on metaphor comprehension were discussed in light of the associated theories. Themes which arose from these discussions and comparisons are within the conceptual framework for this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The review of literature shows that little research has been done on the comprehension of simple metaphors in English language by ESL and EFL students. The understanding of metaphor and other figurative language devices by ESL or EFL readers, the extent to which metaphor and other figurative language devices in English language affect their reading comprehension, and the factors affecting their comprehension of metaphors and figurative language devices in English language have not been investigated in any depth. This study had the purpose of investigating the factors affecting metaphor comprehension by two Chinese graduate students and one Canadian graduate student. This study provided a thick description of the English language education experience of the three graduate students. The researcher was aiming to draw some possible implications from the case studies to help Chinese students better comprehend simple metaphors in English language and to teach English language to Chinese students in the People's Republic of China more effectively.

Three participants were interviewed to gain an understanding of their previous experience. They were asked to explain the meaning of some simple metaphors in English language, and they were also asked to offer their perspectives on the factors influencing metaphor comprehension, as well as their perspectives on how to help Chinese students understand simple metaphors in the English language and how to teach English to the

Chinese students in China. The interviews were all conducted within the framework of the research questions.

Tape recordings of the interview data and the metaphor comprehension task performance data were completely transcribed by the researcher. The research data were reread many times by the researcher in the search for recurring themes.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are a result of the analysis of the data and its relevance to the research literature concerning the teaching of English as a foreign language. Specifically, the researcher tried to draw conclusions about the importance of teaching metaphor and the factors that influence the comprehension of metaphor. Reflections upon the results of the study has led the researcher to propose changes in instruction which would make teaching English to Chinese students in China more effective and efficient.

7.2.1 Are Cultural Factors the Main Ones Influencing Comprehension of Simple Metaphors in English Language for the Chinese Students?

In this research, the two Chinese graduate students have explicitly expressed that culture is important in comprehending simple metaphors in English language. Jim, the Canadian graduate student who has lived all his life in Canada, also realized the importance of culture. Though he believes Canada is a multicultural nation and that there is no such thing as a Canadian culture, he did acknowledge that "I learned from all these people what metaphors mean."

1. Role of Acculturation in Metaphor Interpretation

Brown's studies (1980) show that there are four distinct stages in the acculturation process. Irving (1986) named the four stages of acculturation as: 1) Initial Euphoria, 2)

Irritability and Hostility, 3) Gradual Adjustment, and 4) Adaptation. Brown (1980) also introduced the concept of anomie to his theory on the cultural description of second language acquisition. He claimed that the mastery of the foreign language and the feelings of anomie would take place simultaneously. Besides the concept of anomie, Brown also believed that Schumann's concept of social distance has a lot to do with acculturation and second language acquisition.

Analysis of the two Chinese participants' data showed that John was on his way to full adaptation, while David was in the culture shock stage as indicated by Brown (1980) and Irving (1986). The data on metaphor interpretation showed that John's interpretation of metaphor was closer to that of the native speaker's than that of David. This finding does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that acculturation stages of the learners of English will determine their abilities to comprehend simple metaphors. But it did indicate that the acculturation stage of the two Chinese graduate students had an important role in their comprehension of the simple metaphor comprehension task.

2. Culture Determines the Attribute Presentations in the Topic and the Vehicle

According to Ortony (1979), in order to understand a metaphor, the reader should identify the shared common attributes between the topic and vehicle. Attributes are properties generally believed to be true of the topic and the vehicle. They also include our attitudes and beliefs about them (Ortony, 1980).

In the present study, the researcher found that among the three participants of this study, there was a difference of attribute presentations of the same concept (Instances of this can be found in the discussions in 6.1.3 Culture and the Attribute Presentations in the topic and the vehicle of a Metaphorical Statement, **CHAPTER SIX**). While interpreting the metaphorical statement "Police are hawks on the highway", John and Jim revealed in their attribute mapping of the concept "police" in the context of "on the highway" a feature that police were looking for speeders. On the contrary, David's responses did not show any sign of such a feature in his attribute mapping. From the probing questions, it can be seen that this difference is due to the cultural differences and the different stages of acculturation.

3. Culture Determines the Attribute Salience in the Vehicle

Ortony (1979) believed that the shared common matching attribute between the topic and the vehicle must be of unequal salience. Specifically, the matching attributes in the vehicle of the metaphorical statement must be more salient than its matching attribute in the topic. Salience is the reader's estimation of the degree of prominence of a particular attribute in the vehicle. This salience imbalance characteristic of a metaphor is often referred as "the low/high condition" or "ascending mode".

In this study, the researcher found evidence in the three participants' interpretation that their estimation of the salience of the same vehicle in the same metaphor was different (Instance of this can be found in the discussions in 6.1.4 Culture and the Attribute Salience in the Vehicle of a Metaphorical Statement, CHAPTER SIX). From the interpretations of the metaphorical statement "His face was a beet that afternoon" by the three participants and the probing questions, it was found that the participants believe culture controls or determines the reader's estimation of the salient attribute in the vehicle. This agrees with Ortony (1979) who said that the reader's attribute salience estimation in the vehicle would determine the reader's interpretation of metaphor.

7.2.2 Is English Language Proficiency a Factor Influencing Comprehension of Simple Metaphors in English Language for the Chinese Students?

From the three participants' responses, we can see that English proficiency was stressed as a factor that can influence the comprehension of simple metaphors in English. John and Jim seemed to agree that the general knowledge of the language is important, but the knowledge of a specific attribute in the vehicle or the topic was more important than general knowledge of the language. David believed that the English level was important to the understanding of metaphors in English. He also mentioned that the first language was equally important. He believed that there was a transfer between the languages that the reader had mastered. But David's performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task also showed that only a general knowledge of the topic or vehicle may not help to understand the metaphor. The difficulty in comprehending may be due to the lack of knowledge of the specific attribute in the topic or vehicle.

7.2.3 Is the Level of Cognitive Development a Factor Influencing Comprehension of Simple Metaphors in English Language for the Chinese Students?

The interview data showed the researcher that all three participants believed that the faculty of human mind was a factor that could influence simple metaphor comprehension. The review of literature shows that young children's abilities to use and interpret metaphors increases with age. It is assumed that the people's competence in metaphor comprehension is a late-developing ability in native speakers of English. But there is no further research on the developmental ability of second language learners comprehending metaphors in English language.

7.2.4 Is Individual Experience the Main Source from which the Interpretations of Simple Metaphors in English Language was Drawn for the Canadian Student and the two Chinese Students?

The interview data suggest that all three participants believe individual experience played an important role in metaphor comprehension. John believed that if he had heard the metaphor before and understood it he would feel secure in interpreting the statement. He pointed out that his direct experience was vital to understanding, but he also mentioned that his indirect experience could help comprehension as well. David compared individual experience to education noting that it contributed to metaphor comprehension. Jim also believed that his experience influenced metaphor comprehension. From the three participants' interpretations of the metaphorical statements, it can be deduced that experiences relevant to the topic are essential to achieve a common understanding. Even though the two Chinese students were from the same culture, but their individual experiences differed greatly, their Canadian experiences provided the necessary background for interpretation. This is a developmental process and differences were easily noticed between these students. This is likely to be true of people from difficult cultures.

7.2.5 What Other Factors Affect the Chinese Graduate Students' and the Canadian Graduate Student's Understanding of the Simple Metaphors in English Language?

Besides the above mentioned findings, the researcher also found from the probing questions and analysis that the following points were also factors that affected the participants' metaphor comprehension.

1. The Linguistic Context of the Metaphor Influences Comprehension

Information from the interview data and the metaphor comprehension task suggest that the linguistic context of a metaphor plays an important role in metaphor comprehension. The two Chinese students both suggested that the linguistic context of a metaphor could help them guess out the meaning of the unknown words and orient them to the correct interpretation. The Canadian student seemed to believe that the context was important, but the meaning of the word was also important. If he knew the meaning or had heard of the use of a metaphor before, he would be able to interpret it immediately without consultation of the context in which it occurred. But he also suggested that one of the ways to help others understand a metaphor was to provide an explicit context. The findings of this study suggest that the linguistic context will limit the interaction between the topic and the vehicle in a metaphor.

2. Socioeconomic Status Influences Metaphor Comprehension

It has been shown that in the North American educational system, students from lower socioeconomic families achieve less well than their counterparts from middle or upper socioeconomic families on almost any measure of educational attainment. Jim believes that the socioeconomic status of the reader influences his or her comprehension of simple metaphor in English, because it includes education and experience, and therefore influences linguistic and cognitive abilities. David did not directly point out the socioeconomic status connection of the reader, but he mentioned that family background, parents' education and their position in the society, and his or her experience were important elements for the development of the reader's language ability. John agreed with Jim that the socioeconomic status of the reader influences comprehension a great deal. John and Jim pointed out that there was a difference in the language use between the different social classes. David, on the other hand, did not seem to realize the differences between the language uses among people from different social classes. John and Jim's views seem to agree with Bernstein's restricted and elaborated codes theory (1971) on the point that the social economic status in the society can be reflected in a person's language.

3. Motivation Influences Metaphor Comprehension

It can be seen very clearly from the interview data that the three participants believe that the reader's motivation influences his or her interpretation greatly. An examination of the concept of motivation shows that it is a very broad concept. Motivation in second language acquisition is not just simply constructed by the learners' personal integrative and instrumental forces (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). The target language society, people using the target language, and the target language culture at large are all forces that can form or transform an individual's motivation to learn the target language.

7.2.6 How to Help the Chinese Students in China to Comprehend Simple Metaphors in English Language and How to Teach English Language to Them?

Five points were identified from the data on helping the Chinese students better comprehend simple metaphors in English and on how to learn and teach English. Below are the five points that seem most important.

1. Build the Knowledge of the Attribute Presentation of the Topic and the Vehicle

From the research data, it can be seen that John, David and Jim all realized the importance of the attribute presentation of the topic and the vehicle. In order to help the Chinese students better understand the simple metaphors in English language, according to the three participants, the instructor of English should explain the attributes of the word, illustrate its usage and demonstrate its relationship with other words and concepts while giving classes to students.

2. Contextualize the Simple Metaphors

The linguistic context of a metaphor, as most of the recent research shows, plays an important role in metaphor comprehension. In order to help Chinese students better comprehend the metaphors, the three participants suggested, the instructor should put the simple metaphors into their proper contexts.

3. Formal Instruction on the Principles of Metaphor

John and David suggested that the basic principles of metaphor should be taught in English language classes. They believe that instruction on the principles of metaphor can help the students to understand and to produce metaphors in their daily utterances and their writing.

4. Teaching English Speaking Countries' Culture in the English Class

Danesi (1986), Gunderson, Slade and Rosenke (1988) indicate that the difficulty the EFL or ESL readers have in understanding figurative language in the English language is mainly due to a lack of cultural knowledge. Jim believes there is not a Canadian culture, but he admits that he learned metaphors from "those people". Both Chinese students mentioned that in order to better understand metaphors in English that more about Canadian culture should be taught in the class. This finding agrees with Grittner (1983), Chastain (1976), Baxer (1983) who said that there was great significance in teaching culture in the English language classroom.

5. A Change in English Language Teaching in China

All three participants suggested that the English proficiency of Chinese students was crucial in comprehending metaphors. In order to better understand the metaphor, the student should first have a superior command of the English language. John and David further pointed out that the method of English language instruction in universities and colleges in China was out-of-date and needs to be changed or at least reformed.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

This study was limited to the performance and perspectives of the three participants, the framework of the research questions and the background knowledge of the researcher. However, the researcher felt that there were a number of implications regarding the issues on the instruction of metaphors, cultural knowledge learning, English teaching methodologies for the Chinese students and Chinese English language teachers in China.

7.3.1 Instruction on Metaphor in the EFL Classrooms

From the research data, it can be seen that the importance of the attribute presentation of the topic and the vehicle had been addressed and emphasized by the three participants. In order to help the Chinese students to better understand simple metaphors in English language, according to the three participants, there is a need to include formal instruction on the principles of metaphor.

Ortony states that "the most urgent need now is for more applied research, especially research having to do with the instructional issues" (Ortony, 1984, p. 466). Investigations based on Ortony's Salience Imbalance theory (1979) on the methodology of metaphor instruction, according to the researcher's literature review, were still unexplored. Having investigated the factors influencing metaphor comprehension in the two Chinese students and one Canadian student, the researcher, based on Ortony's metaphor theory (1979) and the concept of direct explicit teaching of reading comprehension suggested by Pearson (1984), proposes a method to teach simple metaphors to the Chinese students in China.

The focus of direct teaching of comprehension is on "explicit attempts to help students develop independent strategies for coping with the kinds of comprehension problems they are asked to solve in their lives in schools" (Pearson, 1984, p. 231). The basic tenets of the direct teaching of comprehension in Pearson (1984) and Brown, Campione, and Day (1981) are: 1) Relevance: the students are made aware of the purpose of the instruction. 2) Definition: the students are informed as to how to apply the strategy as demonstrated by the instructor. 3) Guided practice: the students are given feedback on their use of the strategy as the instruction carried on from simple to the complex. 4) Self-regulation: the students are given chances to try out their use of the strategy and to develop ways to monitor their use of the strategy. 5) Gradual release of the responsibility: the students are gradually given more responsibility for their learning as the instruction proceeds.

The basic procedures for teaching simple metaphors to the Chinese students in China as suggested by the researcher are:

1) Provide the students with a pair of statements conveying the same message. One is a metaphor, the other is a simile. Such as,

a) My lover is as beautiful as a red rose.

b) My lover is a red rose.

2) Provide the students with a very detailed explanation of the meaning and the usage of the vocabulary items in the statements. This process is to help the Chinese students understand the literal meaning of the statements. In case of the above statements, the students should be told what the English words "lover", "beautiful", "red" and "rose" mean.

3) The teacher discusses with the students the likeness as and the differences of the two kinds of sentences with the idea that sentence b) is the same as sentence a), they both convey the same meaning, the only difference is that the word "beautiful" is not present in sentence b). The students should be told by the teacher that sentences like sentence b) are called simple metaphors. At this stage, a brief definition of metaphor could be given to the students.

4) The teacher describes a strategy for the students to understand simple metaphors. First, the students should be informed that in order to understand this kind of metaphor they should search their mind for the unpresented word that is a match between the things being compared in the metaphors. In the instance of the above two statements, the unpresented word is "beautiful". Second, the students should be given the following strategy to search for the unpresented word. The strategy consists of three steps: a) list the attributes of the topic and the vehicle, b) find the common attributes between the topic and the vehicle in the context of the metaphorical statement, c) point out the most salient attribute(s) in the vehicle. The teacher should demonstrate this strategy to the students. Using the sample metaphor statement "My lover is a red rose" as an example, the teacher should ask the students to generate things they know about the vehicle "a red rose" and the

topic "my lover". They may have a long list of attributes of the concepts. For example, they may have such a list.

My lover	A red rose
loves me	beautiful
has a lot of money	smells nice
. . .	. . .
beautiful	needs lots of care and love to keep it alive
must show care and love to keep this relationship	has thorns

The students may then ask to pick up the shared common attribute(s), such as "beautiful" and "needs care and love to keep it alive". Finally, the students are told to pick up the most salient one(s) among the shared common attributes in the vehicle. This will depend on the individual student's perception of the concept. He or she may point out the attribute "beautiful". The above is a simplified version of the attribute presentation. The actual presentation by the students may be much more complicated. And finally, the teacher would change the metaphor into a simile by promoting the salient attribute (beautiful) in the vehicle to the positions of the unpresented word in the simile. The statement "My lover is a red rose" becomes "My lover is as beautiful as a red rose".

5) Then, students are given a new metaphor and are asked to follow the instructor's strategy to find the meaning of the target metaphor.

6) Finally, students are required to practice more metaphor examples.

The above procedure is based on the data from the three participants. Specifically, the idea of using simile was from John and Jim's data. Jim said,

> I think metaphor is similar to simile. I think simile is easy to understand, if you can combine metaphor into simile there might be a way.
> (Jim: 1993/06/04)

John stated,

> I think if you change the form of the metaphor, such as this one, as "Her eyes were as bright and as candles", it would be much easier to understand, maybe, if you change it this way, it is not a metaphor...
> (John: 1993/06/01)

The researcher is fully aware of the complexity of the attribute presentation in the topic and in the vehicle. This procedure for metaphor instruction should be further investigated by experimental research.

7.3.2 Teaching English-speaking Culture in the English Classrooms

Both Chinese students mentioned that in order to better understand simple metaphors in English in the Canadian North American culture specifically, the Canadian culture should be taught. A review of literature for including a systematic study of culture in the ESL or EFL programs shows that there is great significance in including culture in the second or foreign language curriculum: 1) Culture study will help to build and maintain the learner's motivation to learn the target language (Grittner, 1983). 2) Words become meaningless symbols unless they are learned in association with their proper cultural referents, cultural values, and attitudes (Grittner, 1983). Thus, an understanding of culture will help the learner to conduct meaningful communication and lead to a more complete comprehension. 3) As a general educational program, learners should gain an understanding of the nature of the target culture itself (Chastain, 1976). 4) The learners' ethnocentrism should be reduced if the language teachers are preparing them to live or work in an intercultural, international society. Having become equipped with appropriate cultural knowledge, the learners would develop a higher degree of sensitivity to and tolerance for cultural differences than they had prior to the study. 5) Through contrastive culture study, the learners can acquire a fuller understanding of themselves and their own cultural background, thus enriching their lives and contributing to an awareness of the universality of human experience (Baxer, 1983). Both the interview data and the literature review suggest that culture learning is very important in the ESL or EFL classrooms.

The use of language is always culture bound, and many researchers have suggested that language instructors should help learners gain insights into all aspects of the culture system of the target language. But not all languages in this world have a language-culture relationship in a one-to-one manner. In other words, it is not true that there is only one culture for one language. English language is a perfect example of this. Behind the English language, there is embedded British culture, American culture, Canadian culture, Australian culture, etc. The English language is not bound to any specific culture or political system. This characteristic of the English language makes culture learning in English language classrooms a little more complicated. There are overlappings as well as differences among the English speaking cultures. The culture-general as well as the culture-specific aspects of English-speaking cultural knowledge should all be imparted by the instructor in the English language classrooms.

7.3.3 Teaching English Through "Triangulation Approach"

All three participants suggested that the English proficiency of Chinese students is important. In order to better understand metaphor, the student should first have a better command of the English language. John and David further indicated that the method used in English language instruction in universities and colleges in China needs to be changed or reformed. From his own teaching and learning experience in China, the researcher aslo feel that there is a need to re-examine the English language teaching practice in China. But how should the EFL teaching practice in China be changed or reformed?

1. Can the Communicative Language Teaching Approach be Applied in China?

From John's responses, it was found that his skills of using English language and his knowledge of English-speaking culture were mainly acquired after he arrived in Canada. While studying in the middle school, John did not have a good English language teacher, and the political atmosphere and the educational policies during that period in China were not conducive to learning. At the university, John only learned English for two years. On the contrary, David had received a good English language education before coming to Canada. But they had very different language learning results as shown by the metaphor comprehension task. This caused the researcher to further contemplate the reasons for this difference.

As stated in **CHAPTER FOUR** of this thesis, from the background information of the two Chinese participants and the review of English language teaching in China, it can be deduced that English language instruction in universities and colleges in China is mainly through Grammar-translation and the combination of Grammar-translation and Audiolingual approaches.

The Grammar-translation approach is the most traditional method for L2 teaching. Even today, the Grammar-translation approach is still popular in many educational systems in some parts of the world. This method has a long history. It has its roots in the way in which Latin and Greek have been taught for centuries. Its goal is to produce students who can read and write in the target language by teaching them language rules and their applications. The Grammar-translation approach emphasizes reading, writing, translation, and the conscious learning of grammatical rules. Memorization is the main learning strategy and learners spend their class time talking about the language instead of using the language. The learners' native language is the medium of instruction in the class. It is used to explain new items and to make comparisons with the target language. Little attempt is made to communicate orally in the target language.

The limitations of the Grammar-translation approach include the following: 1) The target language is taught through the learners' native language with great emphasis placed on the target language rules rather than on meaning and communicative skills. The direct consequence of this is that the learner usually acquires very poor oral proficiency in the target language. 2) This method orients the learners to believe that language learning is not to acquire the effective use of language but to memorize the grammatical system of the target language. 3) This method treats language as a knowledge which can be measured quantitatively. 4) This method assumes that the role learners play in language learning is passive and inactive.

The Audiolingual approach was developed in the 1950s. It is based on Bloomfield's linguistic theory and Skinner's behaviorist learning theories. Bloomfield's linguistic theory holds the view that language is a habit and learning L2 is to build up a new set of habits. Skinner believed that learning is to change behaviors through conditioning and mechanical stimulus-response. The main goal of the Audiolingual approach is to develop native-like speaking ability in its learners. Translation and reference to the learners' native language are not permitted. Underlying this approach is the notion that L2 learning should be regarded as a mechanical process of habit formation. In the classrooms and language labs, learners are conditioned to respond correctly to both oral and written stimuli. As language is considered to be a conditioned habit, learners are not given time to contemplate their responses but are required to respond quickly to the stimulus utterances. The procedure for a typical audiolingual approach English lesson, as described by Cameron (1992) is: 1) Students first hear a model dialogue containing the key structures that are the focus of the lesson. They repeat each line of the dialogue individually and in chorus after the teacher or the tape recorder. The teacher pays attention to pronunciation, intonation and fluency of the students. Corrections of mistakes on pronunciation and grammar are made. 2) Learn the dialogue by memorization. 3) Key structures are selected from the dialogue and used as the basis for pattern drills. They are first practiced in chorus and then individually. Limited grammatical explanation could be offered at this point. 4) At this stage, students may refer to their textbook, and follow-up reading, writing or vocabulary activities based on the dialogue introduced. 5) After class activities might take place in the language laboratory where further dialogue and drill work is carried out (Cameron, 1992).

Like Grammar-translation, the Audiolingual approach does not regard language learning as a creative process but merely as a mechanical mimicry. The main disadvantage of this approach is that its goals cannot be met by the actual teaching practice. In the actual classroom practice, this approach ignores meaning and communication, and only focuses on the linguistic form. It denies creative responses from the learners, emphasizing only the discovered mechanisms of the language.

English language education in China is mainly carried out through the Grammar-translation, the Audiolingual, or a combination of the Grammar-translation and the Audiolingual approaches. From the researcher's personal teaching and learning experience in China, it can be concluded that the above mentioned language teaching approaches have had very bad effects on English language education in China. It can be observed that most of the students in the Chinese universities, especially the non-English majors students had great difficulty with the authentic oral and written English language.

The past decade has witnessed the development of the Communicative Language Teaching approach. This approach seeks to produce communicatively competent language learners as opposed to the purely linguistically competent language learners. It was considered by the L2 teachers as the preferred contemporary approach to L2 teaching. Communicative competence is the key concept of this approach. According to Brown (1980), this communicative competence is the aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts. It is generally agreed that this communicative competence is made up of four major components or subcategories: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). First, grammatical competence is the mastery of a language code. It is the competence that encompasses "knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 29). It is the type of competence that most classroom teaching in China seeks to promote. The second subcategory is sociolinguistic competence. It is the ability to produce and understand utterances that are appropriate in terms of the context in which they are uttered. Such competence focuses on an understanding of the social context in which language is used, the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction.

It involves a sensitivity to factors such as status, role, attitude, purpose, formality, social convention and so on. The third subcategory is the discourse competence. It is a complement to the grammatical competence. It concerns the ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterences. The fourth subcategory is strategic competence, which was described by Canale and Swain as "the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or due to insufficient competence" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 30).

The characteristics and beliefs of the Communicative Language Teaching approach, as summarized by Cameron (1992), are: 1) Language can be learned by using it to communicate. 2) Developing the communicative competence of the learner is the goal of this approach. 3) Errors are regarded as a necessary and important part of the learning process. 4) The learners' role is central. The emphasis is on student initiative and interaction rather than simply teacher centered direction. 5) The awareness of learner differences is emphasized. In the past, most methodologies have concentrated on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Now this new Communicative Language Teaching approach focused the learners to learn and use language communicatively.

What are implications of this approach to the traditional language learning classroom? Maley (1984) suggests some implications of this approach to the traditional language learning classrooms. They are: 1) Teachers' roles will change. They will not be regarded as persons who possess knowledge and dispense it to their students every day in a small dose. Instead, their job is to set up tasks and activities in which the students play a major role. 2) The students' roles will change. They will no longer be required to follow the lesson passively, instead, they will be demanded to involve themselves as real communicators in activities they were asked to undertake. 3) The teaching and learning materials will change. The materials need to reflect the varieties of the authentic language uses.

The main advantages of the Communicative Language Teaching approach seem to be: 1) It is more likely that the four types of competence in the learners will be produced through this communicative approach than other language-centered approaches. 2) This approach provides the learners with the opportunities to use the language for their own purpose earlier than other approaches. 3) This approach is more motivating to students than other approaches. 4) This approach is more time and energy saving than other approaches, because this approach only teaches what is relevant and necessary. 5) This approach equips the learners with competence for using the language to deal with real world problems.

John's English language development process reflected or partially justified the tenets of the communicative language teaching approach. The environment that he had dealt with in English language was authentic; the role that he played in that situation was real. Learning the English language for John was to meet his basic communication needs in a new culture and a new language. The language learning situation for David was different. The situation in which David had learned English in China was not the authentic use of the target language. From the information in **CHAPTER FOUR** and **CHAPTER FIVE**, it can be seen that the English language education that David received merely dealt with the linguistic aspects. However, the actual competence for the use of language does not just involve the competence to utter words or sentences in the target language. It also involves the competence to react mentally, socially, and culturally as well as verbally in communication situations. The mental, social and cultural reactions are the root of verbal communication. Mere linguistic utterances do not make up communication. Keeping the language learners out of real communication situations and requiring them merely to produce a verbal reaction is like keeping a plant away from the soil while trying to get it to grow and blossom. Language learning methodology should seek to produce communicatively competent learners as opposed to purely linguistically competent language learners. According to Brown (1980), communicative competence is the competence that enables us to convey, interpret and negotiate meanings socially within a specific cultural situation. The communicative language teaching approach endeavors to enhance language learning by improving the communicative competence for the learners. The next question raised naturally is, since there are so many advantages for the communicative approach, can it be applied to English language teaching in China?

In order to answer the above question, we have to examine the characteristics of both the Chinese students and teachers, the present methodology in China, and the applicability of the communicative language teaching approach in the context of China.

The characteristics of the Chinese teachers as summarized by Maley (1984) are: 1) They care about their students. 2) They are conscientious in the lesson preparation. 3) They are constantly trying new ways to improve their teaching. 4) They are willing to work co-operatively with co-teachers in the lesson preparation. 5) They are strongly oriented towards accuracy teaching, with a heavy emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. 6) They want to control every thing happened in the classroom. 7) They are not sure about the accuracy on their use of the language they are teaching.

The current English language teaching practice as the researcher mentioned earlier is mainly through the Grammar-translation, or the combination of Grammar-translation and Audiolingual approaches. The characteristics of the current English language teaching practice in China can be summarized as: 1) Focus very strongly on the linguistic aspect of English language. 2) Memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules is emphasized at the expense of proper use of English language. 3) The quantity and the variety of the English language that the learners received are limited. 4) Opportunities for real communication for learners in English language are very limited. 5) Teachers control the classroom. Teachers do the majority of the talking in the classroom.

The Communicative Language Teaching approach implies a learner-centered approach to curriculum design and teaching, students' access to teachers or others with native-speaker competence in the target language, and the availability of authentic learning materials. It focuses on the students' need for communication in the target language. Of course, this approach also has its disadvantages.

The disadvantages of Communicative Language Teaching approach, seems includes: 1) It has higher demands upon the professional training and competence of the teachers. The teacher must be competent in the target language. The teacher must be energetic and adaptable in order to prepare and intervene the classroom activities. 2) It may perplex learners used to other approaches, at least, in the initial stages. 3) It is more difficult to evaluate students progress than with other existing approaches. It is hard to assess students' mastery of the four competences. 4) It appears to be against the traditional practice, older teachers and learners may oppose its application.

In 1989, Burnaby and Sun conducted a survey of the Chinese English teachers' viewpoints on the Communicative Language Teaching approach and the EFL teaching methods in China. They concluded that the Communicative Language Teaching approach was beyond the expertise of the Chinese teachers. In addition, the class size and schedules, resources and equipment in the Chinese universities, and the examination system made it difficult to completely implement the Communicative Language Teaching approach successfully.

2. The Proposed "Triangulation Approach" to English Language Teaching in China

Realizing the deficiencies of the current English methodology in China, the researcher of this study proposes a new model of English language teaching in China on the basis of the data presented in this research, new language acquisition theories proposed in the West, and his teaching and learning experience in China. This is not an empirically tested or proven model for English language learning and teaching. The new model is named by the researcher the "Triangulation Approach". The term "triangulation" is derived from navigation and military strategy referring to the use of multiple reference points to locate an object's exact position. Here, the researcher uses the concept to refer to the combination of the Grammar-translation, the Audiolingual and the Communicative Language Teaching approach to English language learning and teaching for the purpose of better benefiting the language learning of the English language learners in China.

After studying the pros and cons of the Grammar-translation, and the Audiolingual, the Communicative Language Teaching approaches, as well as the characteristics of both the Chinese teachers and the students and the present English language teaching practice in China, the researcher decided to propose this "Triangulation approach". This model tries to include the advantages of the three mentioned approaches and change them in a way which can be applied by the Chinese teachers and students in the context of China. The Triangulation approach has the following characteristics: 1) Acquire linguistic competence through the content area knowledge learning. This model starts from the belief that the content area knowledge can provide real meaning for the language learners. Using content area knowledge, the teacher can provide a basis for a meaningful language learning context. The teachers should first modify the existing language textbooks published in China, and add content area knowledge such as history to the language textbooks, using the text to illustrate the grammatical usage of the English language. Secondly, the teachers should identify the essential vocabulary in the text and put them into the glossary. Both the content area knowledge and the linguistic knowledge objectives should be clearly identified by the teacher, the objectives should be realistic and easily attained. This notion of teaching through content is developed from the beliefs of language teaching in the Grammar-translation and the Communicative Language Teaching approaches. 2) The "i + 1" Comprehensible Input: The language of instruction at the lower level in this approach is both Chinese and English. English should be spoken in simple words and structure and used very sparsely. At the higher levels, the language of instruction should be English. Using the Audiolingual idea of using sound labs, patterned drills should improve students' pronunciation in English language. Films and tapes by native English-speaking people should be played in the sound labs for higher level students. 3) Increase student to student communicative interactions: The Communicative Language Teaching approach promotes real communication in the target language. Research also suggests that the interactions among the learners can enhance language learning. At the higher level of language learning, the instructor should assign simple themes and ask the students to communicate in English language.

As the researcher mentioned earlier, issues related to language learning and teaching usually have more than one answer for each issue. Language and language learning are very complex and very evasive concepts. The model that the researcher has proposed is merely a small attempt to deal with a very large issue. It needs to be revised and further empirically tested.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

7.4.1 Further Research on the "low/high condition"

According to the Salience Imbalance Hypothesis theory (Ortony, 1979), a metaphor is a statement of nonliteral similarity wherein two terms of a disparate nature are compared, that is, the terms are not really alike. Meaningful comprehension of metaphor cannot be accomplished without the condition that the two terms in a metaphor, namely, the topic and the vehicle, have matching attributes which must be of unequal salience, or prominence, for the two terms. Moreover, the matching attributes between the two terms must be directional. Specifically, the matching attributes must be subordinate characteristics of the topic and superordinate characteristics of the vehicle, that is to say, that the matching attributes must be more salient in the vehicle than in the topic. This is referred to as the "low/high condition". This notion of salience imbalance between the topic and the vehicle is central to Ortony's theory. Support of this notion comes from research by Evan and Gamble (1987).

The data of this study suggest a different condition of the salience imbalance between the topic and the vehicle, namely, the "high/low condition". The data suggest that the matching attributes can be superordinate characteristics in the topic and subordinate characteristics in the vehicle, that is to say, that the matching attributes can also be more salient in the topic than in the vehicle. This finding does not agree with Ortony's Salience Imbalance theory (1979). Further investigation on this finding and on Ortony's theory is recommended.

7.4.2 Further Research on the Mapping of the Attribute Presentation for the Topic and the Vehicle

At the beginning of this study, the researcher had planned to elicit attribute presentation for the topic and the vehicle in each metaphorical statement in the metaphor comprehension task. But the pilot study showed that the plan for the mapping of the attribute presentation for the topic and the vehicle by adult students is unrealistic. Because the concept of the attribute of the topic and the vehicle, as Ortony (1980) elaborates, includes "properties known or generally believed to be true of the things being compared, attitudes towards them, and beliefs about them" (Ortony, 1980, p. 12). A mature adult, no matter whether he or she is a native speaker of English, is able to generate many, many attributes. This makes the mapping of attributes almost impossible. Further research on attribute mapping for the topic and vehicle by adults is recommended by the researcher.

7.5 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY

The culmination of this study would be incomplete without mentioning the applicability of the methodology to this study. In an effort to explore the factors influencing the three participants' comprehension of simple metaphors in English language, the researcher chose qualitative inquiry. The design of this study was both descriptive and interpretative in nature, with the intention of obtain a rich, thick and comprehensive understanding of the three participants' perceptions of the factors influencing their metaphor comprehension and their performance on the simple metaphor comprehension task. In this study, the researcher focused on three aspects of the methodology, namely, the research instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

In order to uncover the factors that influenced metaphor comprehension of the three participants, the researcher is confident that the semistandarded interview allowed this aim to be achieved. In using open-ended questions, more information was obtained for thorough description and interpretation as necessary. The simple metaphor comprehension task provided opportunities for further information to justify the three participants' responses.

Bogdan and Biklen said, "The interview is best used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insight on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 135). In this study, the data were gathered in a personalized manner. It was found at the end of the data collection that the three participants had provided very valuable information because of the relationship between the three participants and the researcher which provided opportunities for open-ended questions and responses.

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APPENDIX A: SIMPLE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TASK

1). His face was a beet that afternoon.
2). The prisoner's bare back was a barbershop pole.
3). Police are hawks on the highway.
4). Swans are the ballerinas of the birds.
5). Peanut butter is the glue of sandwich fillings.
6). Camels are the trucks of the deserts.
7). Apartment buildings are the giraffes of the city.
8). Flowers are the calendars of the garden.
9). That morning my mouth was a desert.
10). The bread she baked was a rock.
11). The young child was the parrot of his family.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ELICIT INFORMATION ON THE PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND

What is your name?

How old are you?

When did you come to Canada?

What is your specialization?

Which department are you in now?

Where were you born?

How many sisters and brothers do you have?

What are they doing at the present?

What do your parents do?

What are their educational backgrounds?

Do they encourage you to do academic work? In what way?

Do they speak English?

Do they speak any other foreign languages?

Do you have any relatives who had influenced your English language learning?

When did you start your elementary school?

When did you start your English language learning?

What kind of textbook did you use at that time?

Did you listen, read and speak in English?

How did your teacher teach English?

Do you think this is a good method of teaching? Why?

How did you learn English at that time? Do you think it is a good way to learn English?

How many hours did you spend every week on English language learning at that time?

Do you think that your English language learning at that time has formulated a firm foundation for your future English language development and metaphor comprehension?

What did you read besides your textbooks at that time?

Did you watch English language teaching program on TV at that time?

Did you listen to the English language teaching program on the radio?

Why did you learn English at that time?

When did you start your university education?

Did you learn English language when you were at the university?

What kind of textbook did you use at that time?

How did the teacher teach English at the university?

Do you think this is a good method of teaching? Why?

How did you learn English at that time?

How many hours did you spend every week on English language learning at that time?

Do you think that your English language learning at that time has improved your English language development and metaphor comprehension?

What did you read besides your textbooks at that time?

Did you watch English language teaching program on TV at that time? Did you listen to the English language teaching program on the radio?

Did you have any good friends or relatives at that time who had influence your English learning?

Did you speak to the native English language speakers at that time?

Did you listen to VOA or BBC at that time?

Did you see movies in English language at that time?

Did you read novels or poetry in English at that time?

Why did you study English at that time?

Did you prepare TOEFL or GRE at that time? Why did you prepare that? How did you prepare listening, reading comprehension?

Did you attend any English courses given by a native speaker at that time? How did you like the course? Why?

Did you learn anything about the Canadian culture, history, geography, and the government at that time? How did you learn and why did you learn?

When did you start your graduate program in China?

Did you learn English language when you were a graduate student at the university in China?

What kind of textbook did you use at that time?

Was it a good textbook? Why?

Did you listen, read and speak in English language?

How did the teachers teach English? Do you think this is a good method of teaching? Why?

How did you learn English at that time?

How many hours did you spend every week on English language learning at that time?

What did you read besides your textbooks at that time?

Did you watch English language teaching program on TV at that time?

Did you speak to the native English language speakers at that time?

Did you listen to VOA or BBC at that time?

Did you listen to Radio Beijing?

Did you see movies in English at that time?

Did you read novels or poetry in English at that time?

Why did you study English at that time?

Did you prepare TOEFL or GRE at that time? Why did you prepare that? How did you prepare?

Did you attend any courses given by a native speaker at that time?

What kinds of course did you attend in this Canadian University?

What kind of textbook do you usually use?

How many people in your family are here in Canada?

Does your wife speak English?

Do your children speak English?

What languages do you usually use at home?

Do you watch TV programs very often?

What kind of programs do you usually watch?

Do you read newspaper, magazines, novels or poetry everyday?

Do you have a lot of associations with the Canadians?

Do you have a lot of associations with the international students?

Do you involve in the community and university activities?

Do you enjoy your stay in Canada? Why?

Where do you live?

How long do you plan to stay in Canada?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES

After reading these metaphors in English, what factors do you think will influence the comprehension of simple metaphors in English language?

Do you think that the English language proficiency is a factor that will influence the understanding of metaphors in English language? Why do you think so? To what extent do you think that will influence the comprehension of metaphors in English language?

Do you think that the cultural difference is a factor that will influence the understanding of metaphors in English language?

Why do you think so? To what extent do you think that will influence the comprehension of metaphors in English language?

Do you think that the personal experience is a factor that will influence the understanding of metaphors in English language?

Why do you think so? To what extent do you think that will influence the comprehension of metaphors in English language?

Do you think that the social and economic status of the reader is a factor that will influence your understanding of metaphors in English language? Why do you think so? To what extent do you think that will influence your comprehension of metaphors in English language?

Do you think that the educational background is a factor that will influence your understanding of metaphors in English language?

Why do you think so? To what extent do you think that will influence the comprehension of metaphors in English language?

Do you think that the motivation is a factor that will influence the understanding of metaphors in English language? Why do you think so? To what extent do you think that will influence the comprehension of metaphors in English language?

Read the following and then answer the questions:

How do you interpret the metaphor "Her eyes were candles" in the following? One is with a context, the other without context.

Her eyes were candles.

The Princess Saralinda was tall, with fresias in her dark hair and she wore serenity brightly like the rainbow. It was not easy to tell her mouth from the nose, or her brow from the white lilac. Her voice was faraway music and her eyes were candles burning on a tranquil night.

Do you think that the context in which a metaphor appears is a factor that will influence the understanding of metaphors in English language? Why do you think so? To what extent do you think that will influence the comprehension of metaphors in English language?

How can you be helped to understand metaphors in English?

How to teach metaphors to the Chinese students?

How to teach English to the Chinese students in China?

APPENDIX D: JOHN'S PERFORMANCE ON THE SIMPLE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TASK

1). His face was a beet that afternoon.

When John was asked to interpret this metaphor, he immediately responded, "this means his face is red." He explained that the reason he interpreted it this way was

> It is very simple, that the beet is red, and I had heard people say this kind of sentence in Canada, um.. such as "His is face is as red as a beet"... The matching attribute between the topic and the vehicle in this metaphor is that they are all red. Um... red is salient in the word beet, Because I know beet is red, I had eaten a beet once, it is a type of vegetable, it is very small, it is almost the same size as radish, they are look very much similar. Some types of the beet are big, too. The peel is dark, dark red, it is sweet, after you cooked it, the inside is red, very red, even the liquid inside is red, too. (1993/06/01)

John said that he only knew this word after he had arrived in Canada. He also pointed out that the beet that he saw in China was different from those that he had seen in Canada. John continued,

> Well, before I come to Canada, I did not know this word, but, I knew the object, it is white and big in China, people use it to make sugar, I also had eaten it in China. When I was in the countryside, we young and educated youth bought the beet wastes, which are big beets that had been used in the factory to make sugar, we took them to our farm house and we used them to feed pigs. In fact, you can buy them in the superstore here, I like it. I think I have heard people used this word, it was something like, "His face was as red as a beet". As this is in English, and we are now in Canada, so I have to interpret this this way. If this is in the Chinese, and I read this in China, I would interpret very differently.
> (1993/06/01)

2). The prisoner's bare back was a barbershop pole.

After reading this sentence, John said,

> A barbershop pole is just a pole, and there are some colored stripes on it, and it rotates. I cannot remember the color of the stripes, usually it is white,

black, I cannot tell exactly, I guess the barbershop poles here are very much the same as those in China. The matching attribute is that they are all signs. In the pole, it is salient. Because the pole is a sign and it is only a sign.
(1993/06/01)

When John was asked to interpret the meaning of the sentence, he said,

I think the barbershop pole is a sign indicate that there is a barbershop nearby, the prisoner's bare back, the prisoner bared his back, I think this must indicates something, normally, the prisoner should wear the prisoner's uniform, that uniform is different from the ordinary people's, he bared his back maybe indicate that they were going to do something, maybe this is a symbol for other prisoners, and this tells the others that he is ready to do, this maybe is just a message that one prisoner try to convey to other prisoners without letting the police know what they are doing, and they do this just try to avoid being discovered by the prison guards. That is how I understand this sentence.
(1993/06/01)

3). Police are hawks on the highway.

After reading this sentence, John said,

The matching attribute is that they take something away from you. In hawk, it is salient. Um... hawk, this is a big bird, I think, hawk is a big bird, I think it watches, they open their sharp eyes in the evening, maybe they will do something in the evening, they will catch small animals for food, so maybe this, so I can think this way, so police are hawks on the highway means police are watching closely on, somebody who is speeding, um, on the highway, Right?
(1993/06/01)

John further explained the reason. He said,

Because, maybe, maybe this is because that I lived in Canada for almost six years now. So I know on the highway there are always a lot of police there doing this kind of things... I have never been caught by the police, but I heard some of my Chinese friends had got this kind of experience, and I also know some of my friends are caught because they over-speeded on the highway. Each time when we went out, we would try to drive under the speed limit, never try to over the limit. I also knew that some of my Chinese friends have some kind of device to check the police, to see if they themselves had been followed by the police.
(1993/06/01)

4). Swans are the ballerinas of the birds.

John's interpretation is,

> The Matching attribute is beautiful and delicate, in ballerina, it is salient. Ballerinas usually are people who can dance, who have very beautiful and delicate bodies. We sometimes describe the ballet dancers as swans, so maybe you can also use it this way, you can say that the swans are ballerinas of the birds. This means that the swan is the most beautiful looking and, or very graceful. They are the most graceful birds in the bird family. Like among the performance dances, the ballet is the most graceful dance among the other types of the dance.
> (1993/06/01)

When the researcher asked John why he interpreted this sentence as this, he explained, "It is just this way, both the English and the Chinese are the same."

5). Peanut butter is the glue of sandwich fillings.

John explained that,

> The matching attribute is that they are thick and can stick things together. In glue is salient, because the function of glue is to stick things together. Peanut butter is like the peanut sauce. Peanut butter itself is used to make something, which is just like a glue. It is used here in the sandwich. A sandwich is two pieces of the bread, and some small pieces of cheese, or vegetables or hams or other meats put together. I knew the word sandwich long, long time ago, when I was studying English in China, I learned this word. But at that time, I did not know what a sandwich was exactly looked like. I never tasted it in China. I had seen them on the foreign newspapers or advertisements. But I had never tasted it. Only after I came to Canada, I tried my first sandwich. When I left China, I had not heard that anywhere in China that could sell sandwich. But, now, I heard that many people in China can eat sandwich, because there are many restaurants in China that are selling sandwich. I heard there is even one in Harbin, right? The Canadians like it, I don't like it, it is not very good. I like the Chinese food.
> (1993/06/01)

He continued,

> And the peanut butter is something that you can put into the sandwich and I think, it be served like the glue that it will stick the two things together. I think that the meaning of this sentence is that the peanut butter sticks the two things together. I think the purpose that the peanut butter is in there is not that we use it as the glue to stick things together, but to make the sandwich taste more delicious. In fact, you can also use other things instead of peanuts butter. Maybe you can just use milk butter, or other sauces. Like, sesame butter. You know, the sesame and the peanut are very similar, they are all seeds of the plants, and the their taste are similar, I prefer sesame butter than peanut butter, but I cannot find sesame butter here in Edmonton.
> (1993/06/01)

6). Camels are the trucks of the desert.

John explained,

> The matching attribute is that they can all carry things. In truck, it is salient. Because that is what a truck is for... Desert, because usually in the cities, the common vehicle is the truck to carry the goods or heavy things for people. But in desert, the only thing that you can use to carry this kind of goods or things is camel, so we use the trucks to describe the camels. The sentence means that the camels are very useful. People use them in desert to carry goods. This is a very easy one.
> (1993/06/01)

7). Apartment buildings are the giraffes of the city.

John interpreted the above sentence as the following,

> The matching attribute is that they are all tall. In giraffe is salient, because giraffe is the kind of animal has a very long neck, um... it looks very high. It has very long, very thin necks. Um... I think people use this sentence to mean that the apartment buildings are very, very high in the city.
> (1993/06/01)

8). Flowers are the calendars of the garden.

John said,

> The matching attribute is they tell the seasons. umm... In calendar, it is salient. Because, from the calender, you can know the date, um..., the seasons, and um... because different flowers will bloom in different seasons, and um... usually in the garden where you ..plant a lot of flowers. So, from the flowers in the garden, when it flowers and when it does not flower, or when its leaves turn color, and so on, you can judge the time, especially the seasons from the flower changes. It is very easy.
> (1993/06/01)

9). That morning my mouth was a desert.

At first, John took the word "desert" as the word "dessert", and he interpreted,

> The matching attribute is that they are all sweet. In dessert, it is salient. Because dessert is usually very sweet, and delicious Um..., that morning my mouth was a dessert. It means, in the morning, he said something sweet to his wife.
> (1993/06/01)

After the researcher made the correction for him, he continued,

> If it is desert, that means the mouth, after the long night sleeping, the mouth will keep opening all the night and it is very dry, especially in Alberta, the

climate is very dry, I had this kind of experience that my nose and my mouth were very dry. And my tongue was just like frozen.... The matching attribute is that they are dry, salient in desert, because in desert it is dry usually.
(1993/06/01)

10). The bread she baked was a rock.

John said,

The bread, that she baked was a rock, it mean that the bread was too hard. .... Because the rock was very hard. The matching attribute is hard, in rock it is salient.
(1993/06/01)

11). The young child was the parrot of his family.

John said,

The matching attribute is imitate, in parrot is salient, because the parrot can only imitate. Um.., it means something like that the child can tell anything about the family, because, the parrot is a kind of bird that can speak what people say after it heard the sound, the little child is somewhat like a parrot, he does not understand what is happening, but he can tell to other what has happened in the family, or repeat what his parents words to others. This is the reason why people say that the child is the most naive, and from the child you can get the information that you want. Because I have a little body, I know exactly this kind of the situation.
(1993/06/01)

APPENDIX E: DAVID'S PERFORMANCE ON THE SIMPLE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TASK

1). His face was a beet that afternoon.

When David was asked to interpret this sentence, he read the whole sentence and then told the researcher that he could not interpret the sentence because he did not know the meaning of the word "beet". The researcher asked him to have a guess and David refused. He requested to use his dictionary to look up the word. Permission was granted by the researcher. The dictionary that David used was published in China, its name is A New English and Chinese Dictionary, David commented on this dictionary, he said,

> It is a good dictionary. Um... I used it in China and now I am still using it. I have two copies of this dictionary, one is this in office, the other is at home. It is a very good dictionary. I always use this dictionary. I don't use English and English dictionaries very often. But I have a Longman English and English dictionary in China, I did not bring it with me, it is not convenient to use. I always use this dictionary. It is a good dictionary.
> (1993/06/07)

From the dictionary, David found that the Chinese counterpart for the English word "beet" was "TIANCAI". Then he struggled to interpret the meaning of this metaphorical statement.

> .... Maybe the meaning, is that afternoon, maybe, his face was like the shape of a beet. Um.... or maybe he was angry, his face was green and white. Maybe this sentence describes anger. Um.... maybe he was angry, and um... his face turned to green and white.
> (1993/06/07)

After David stopped interpreting, the researcher asked why he interpreted the way that he had just done. He went on to explain,

> Um.... Because I am interpreting this from the Chinese perspective. Because from the surface, you can see that the upper part of the beet is a green and the lower part, the part in the soil, is white, so I think it can be used to describe the color of a person's face, the kind of color which is green and white, indicating that he was unhappy, and angry. From this

> sentence, you can... Maybe the second explanation is, maybe it implies that something sweet, in the afternoon maybe the sunlight was shining on his face and his face looked very happy, maybe he was a happy person, and was smiling very sweetly. You know, beet is the root of the plant, and use this root you can produce the sugar, I think if you consider this aspect of the root, and you can say that his face was very sweet, and maybe to some extent, it can express happiness. Oh, I think this is the meaning. It means that he was happy, and smiled sweetly. The common matching attribute is the sweetness of course. Sweetness in beet is salient.
> (1993/06/07)

2). The prisoner's bare back was a barbershop pole.

After reading the sentence, David said,

> Oh, that means the prisoner, the criminal, was in prison, I think the prisoner was in the prison. The prisoner was beaten heavily, because there is a "bare back", it indicates that he didn't wear anything, and on the bare back there were some scratches, or some beatings on his back.
> (1993/06/07)

After David finished his explanation, the researcher posed a probing question "What are the matching attributes between the topic and the vehicle?"

> The matching attribute is that they all have stripes on. This attribute is salient in the vehicle. Because from my own experience, um... the barbershop pole, there are always some stripes on it, the black, white or other color on it and this pole will always rotate. And from the films or televisions, you can always see that the criminals in the prison, they are bare-backed, and they always violate the regulations of the prison, sometimes they were being beaten by the police. So if you use this word barbershop pole to describe the back, the surface of the back.
> (1993/06/07)

3). Police are hawks on the highway.

After David read this sentence, he asked the researcher,

> The police are hawks on the highway. Um.... "hawks" means some kind of birds? Police? It means people, Policeman?
> (1993/06/07)

Then David explained,

> Um... the policeman are hawks on the highway, this means, from this sentence that I can explain that the policeman walked alert. Hawks on the Highway. Oh, yes, I remember. Um... that hawks are flying very high in the sky trying to find some opportunities or chances to eat something, get the benefits from the people and the other animals. Oh, sometimes, the

> police and the thieves co-operate and commit crimes. The sentence I think maybe describe the policeman cannot always be as good as people had expected and they sometimes steal things, too. Um... they sometimes also try to find some chances to earn some money which is not so good. Because, you know, there are always lots of crimes are related to the policeman. The matching attribute is that they are all trying to get something from others.
> (1993/06/07)

4). Swans are the ballerinas of the birds.

David had a little problem with the word "ballerina", but this time he did not ask the permission for using the dictionary, he tried to guess the meaning.

> This one, swans are the, I don't know this words, of the birds. Swans are, maybe, maybe this sentence means that swans are the most beautiful looking birds, maybe they look very beautiful, or something, maybe something, I don't know this word.
> (1993/06/07)

David explained the reason that he guessed the word this way was,

> I don't know this word, but we have a Chinese expression, "Swans are the most beautiful birds". So, I can guess from there. I cannot tell the matching attributes between the two.
> (1993/06/07)

5). Peanut butter is the glue of sandwich fillings.

David explained that this sentence has two levels of meaning. He said,

> From, from the surface, I can guess that the peanut butter is doing something to join two the things together. OK? I think maybe this sentence also indicates that a person or some organizations that make two other persons or organizations to get together. Is that the meaning?
> (1993/06/07)

When the researcher asked him why he interpreted this way, he explained,

> I knew what is sandwich, what is peanut butter, what is glue. The matching attribute is that they can stick things together. In glue it is salient. Glue is something that can put two things together, so that is it. To me this just has two levels of meaning.
> (1993/06/07)

6). Camels are the trucks of the deserts.

David's interpretation of this sentence is,

> Oh, this is easy, I think. This sentence means, that camels are the only travelling vehicles in the desert. Or camels are doing something very important in the desert, they carry necessary living substances without which we cannot live. The matching attribute is that they all carry things. In truck it is salient. We see everyday that trucks carry things around.
> (1993/06/07)

7). Apartment buildings are the giraffes of the city.

David interprets this sentence as,

> I think, it means, you know, giraffes, normally among birds or small animals, giraffes are very tall. So, it means that in cities, apartment buildings are tall, so, because they are taller than some other, you know, some common houses.
> (1993/06/07)

The researcher asked David "Do you know what is a giraffe?". He replied,

> Yes, of course, I know that, it is a kind of bird, with long legs. As it is tall, you can see it easily. Just like the apartment buildings in city, you can see them easily.
> (1993/06/07)

8). Flowers are the calendars of the garden.

David thought that this sentence was very easy. He said,

> This one means, I think, flowers can tell the seasons, because I know that flowers can tell the seasons. The matching attribute is that they can tell time. In Calendar, salient, because a calendar tells time.
> (1993/06/07)

9). That morning my mouth was a desert.

David said,

> That means that I was very thirsty and my mouth was dry that morning. The matching attribute is dry. Because, you know, there is no water in the desert. Dry is salient. It is hot during the daytime and cold in the evening.
> (1993/06/07)

10). The bread she baked was a rock.

David said,

That means that she did not do a good job, the bread that she baked was so hard to eat. Because it is like a rock. The matching attribute is hard. A rock, I think, is not so easy, it is something very hard. Hard is salient in rock.
(1993/06/07)

11). The young child was the parrot of his family.

David said,

This means that the child imitates what other people have said, and his or her family members love that. Imitation is the matching attribute, it is salient in the parrot. Because, a parrot, can imitate people's sound, and when the young child learns the language, he will mainly imitating other people, especially his parents' language.
(1993/06/07)

APPENDIX F: JIM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE SIMPLE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TASK

1. His face was a beet that afternoon.

After reading this Jim explained that there were two levels of meaning that this sentence was trying to convey. He said,

> To me, that this sentence is trying to communicate that his face is very red, that is the first level, the first immediately level, the meaning I get out from it, that was basically on, the word beet, and the beet is red, and I heard that expression before, red as a beet, OK, now when I think of it further, I would say that I have the image that a person have been sunburned, all right? And I would say that the purple, red face, in relation to the beet, and in relation to the afternoon, I just have the image of a person being outside during the afternoon, and the sun is at its height, face is normally the most exposive part of the body, and the face is the red one. I don't think, I didn't think, the idea that his face is a beet that afternoon is due to embarrassment, because you know in my use of language, a red face indicates overly sunburnt or due to the embarrassment, but because it says that in the afternoon, normally you blushed for a brief movement, so I interpret it as the person was sunburnt, OK?
> (1993/06/04)

When the researcher asked Jim, why he interpreted this way, Jim further explained,

> Because, because to get a sunburnt, of course certain tun of the sun usually in the afternoon, if you are embarrassed, you know it will not associate with a period of time especially in the afternoon. I don't know that metaphor actually means anything except an image, and I think there is an another reason that I can understand it because I have heard of that type of comparison before, I did not got this through any complex reading. I just understand it, subconsciously.
> (1993/06/04)

2. The prisoner's bare back was a barbershop pole.

After reading this sentence, Jim said,

> Well, the image that it brings up to me, what this metaphor indicates for me is someone who had been lashed, OK, someone who had been punished, in the British Navy tradition, there was a code of conduct, for every infraction, there was a punishment usually being lashed with a whip. You receive that

> number of lashes for a certain infraction, and it does not correspond exactly to that reality, but when I think of the barbershop pole in terms of prisoners, and the bare back, and immediately bring to mind the image that somebody having been lashed.
> (1993/06/04)

Jim explained that the reason that he comprehended this sentence this way was,

> The matching attribute is that they all have stripes on them. It is salient in the barbershop pole. Because a barbershop pole is red interspersed with white, a barbershop pole, traditionally, a barber was also a surgeon, that is why the red is in there, the red indicates blood, so when I think of the barbershop pole, I think of that I can easily superimposed on the idea that somebody's back were, the blood and the whip had been raised by the lash, whips go in and stripes across the back.
> (1993/06/04)

3). Police are hawks on the highway.

After reading this, Jim said,

> That indicates to me is that the police are watching closely on the speeders on the highway. It also indicates that the police are predators, they are always looking for speeders unjustly in order to accumulate revenue for the municipality, and I say it because a hawk is a predatory bird, the police are usually lingering on highways looking for speeders. They are there just waiting for you to speed.
> (1993/06/04)

When Jim interpreted this sentence, he explained,

> The main thing that comes to me when I think of hawks is they have very keen eyesight, looking for their prey the same as the police on the highway, it extends to give people a negative one. Whenever the money come to the picture, people tend to think of things negatively.
> (1993/06/04)

4). Swans are the ballerinas of the birds.

Jim thought this sentence was not grammatically correct, he made a correction on the grammar of this sentence and then he explained,

> Swan are the ballerinas of the birds, I would say "Swans are ballerinas of birds", not the birds, and I would. What brings up to me was the music of the Checosky, The Swan Lake, the ballet, because, it is, it is very straight forward reference. To me this sentence means that the swans are very graceful. They are more graceful than most of the birds, and they are also more beautiful looking than other birds.
> (1993/06/04)

He further explained the reason of his interpretation,

> The ballerinas, are known to be more graceful and more beautiful looking women, not the average persons on the street. Their bodies are very straight, Right? And they are up on their toes, Right? And in the traditional ballet, they were in white, swans are like that, with long and thin, curved necks, Right? White, and I just think of the ballet The Swan Lake, so I think of.
> (1993/06/04)

5). Peanut butter is the glue of sandwich fillings.

Jim believes that this sentence has two levels of meaning. He explained,

> What this means to me, first is that the peanut sticks the sandwich together. Yon know, the peanut butter is very dry, any time that you think of the peanut butter, the first thing that will come to your mind is how sticky they are, and they are eaten only out of the necessity. So to me the second level of the meaning is that the peanuts butter sandwich is not tasty, it is not often the best thing in the world to eat, not the tastiest thing in the world, and of course, that is because of the word glue, which references the filling is very dry and apparently very tasteless, and it has a function, that is about all.
> (1993/06/04)

6). Camels are the trucks of the deserts.

After reading this sentence, David comments and interprets,

> Well, that is true, pretty much so, I guess that, trucks are the most common type of vehicle for hauling lots of things for long distance, and so that is what camels also known for. What this metaphor means basically is, to me, that the camels are used to transport, and move around much of the produces and the products that the society needs to move around by people from place to place, and, that is about it, that is very straight forward.
> (1993/06/04)

7). Apartment buildings are the giraffes of the city.

Jim's interpretation of this sentence is very simple. He said, "It means that they are tall, because the giraffe is tall and has a long neck."

8). Flowers are the calendars of the garden.

When Jim was interpreting this metaphor, he said,

This one does not come to me right away, when I think about the calenders, it tells you what time of year it is. So the same thing, I mean, in the garden, at certain time of the year you will know from the changes of the garden. It means that flowers can indicate time, if you look at your garden, and you look at the flowers are blooming and which are not, and then you can normally tell the progression of the reasons, Right?
(1993/06/04)

9). That morning my mouth was a desert.

After reading this sentence, Jim said,

Well, I guess, he needs a drink of water. It means basically that his mouth is very dry. Because the conventional image of a desert, is that it is dry, and without water, now I know that most of the desert is not like that, but that is the conventional image of the desert.
(1993/06/04)

10). The bread she baked was a rock.

After Jim read this sentence, he said,

It is awful, too long in the oven. This means that the bread was rock hard.
(1993/06/04)

11). The young child was the parrot of his family.

"This sentence means," Jim said,

... that the child talked the most, probably that he talked a lot than he should. It means basically that the child talks a lot and mostly he is mimicking.
(1993/06/04)

APPENDIX G: ACCEPTABLE INTERPRETATIONS TO THE SIMPLE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TASK

1. It was red.
2. He was beaten.
3. They are watching for speeders. Or they chase after speeding cars.
4. They are graceful. They move smoothly and gently on the water.
5. It is sticky. It sticks the sandwich together.
6. They carry cargo.
7. They are tall/high.
8. They indicate the seasons. They tell the time of year.
9. It was dry/thirsty.
10. It was hard/stale/heavy/overcooked.
11. He repeated what was said. He was a mimic.